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#133

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

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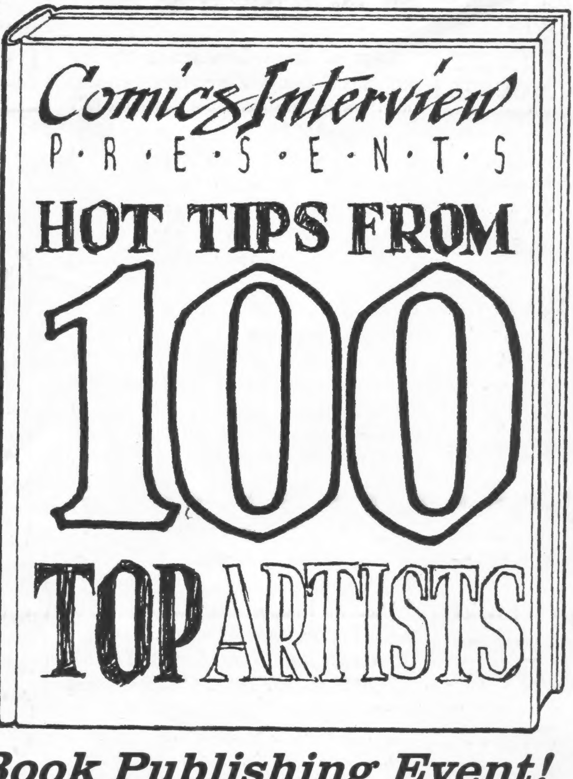

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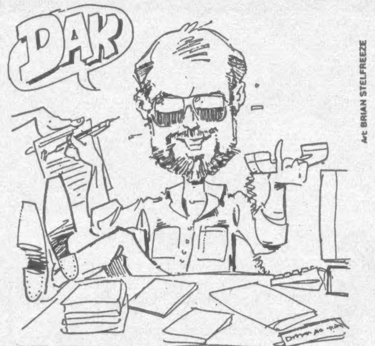
cover:
TODD McFARLANE
as — the beav(is)



Art: BRIAN STELFREEZE

UP FRONT

Dept. of Trivial Coincidences: My first professional sale, a science-fiction vignette titled "Myrra," appeared in the September 1971 issue of AMAZING STORIES magazine — the cover of which happened to be provided by **Dan Adkins** (interviewed this issue).

That date also serves to remind that I've now been a pro for something more than 22 years — my, how time flies when you're meeting deadlines!

Actually, my first comics stories didn't appear in print until 1972, in the pages of Skywald's PSYCHO and NIGHTMARE magazines. These, my first comics sales, were made via long-distance submission to **Sol Brodsky** (the "Sky" part of Skywald).

Another Trivial Coincidence: Who just happens to be the first person I meet in early '74 when I go to work for Marvel? None other than **Sol Brodsky,** back from his stint at Skywald and helping head up Marvel's foray into the black-and-white comics magazine field.

Little did I suspect that, years later, I'd be publishing black-and-white comics, too — titles such as CYCOPS, SOUTHERN KNIGHTS, X-THIEVES and MICRA, among others.

CYCOPS marked artist **Brian Stelfreeze's** dynamite comics debut, and we've just made arrangements for the full-color return of CYCOPS in all-new stories from Millennium Comics, so watch for 'em, will ya!

We're also hard at work on HOT TIPS FROM 100 TOP PROS, which promises to be the *sine qua non* of sources for how to break into comics and be a success — coming to a comics shop near you in the next couple months.

That's it for this month. Be here next issue for a no-holds-barred free-for-all as we tear into the changing state of comics distribution and what it means to each and every one of us.

—DAVID

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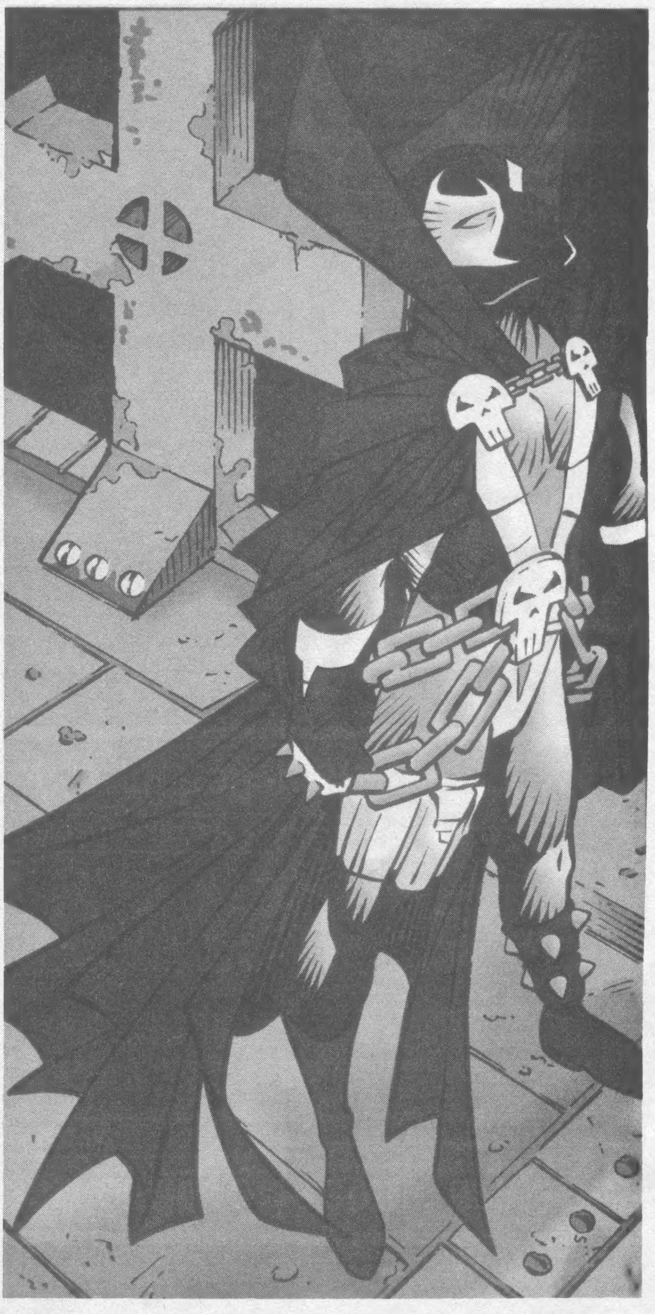
"Todd was trying to get someone to do some assisting."

TODD McFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

Todd McFarlane Productions has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years, due in no small part to Terry Fitzgerald. Terry, known as Todd's right-hand man, joined Todd early on during his AMAZING SPIDER-MAN run as an assistant and has grown to negotiate contracts with TV and movie studios. Jim Salicrup had an opportunity to chat with Terry to discover who the



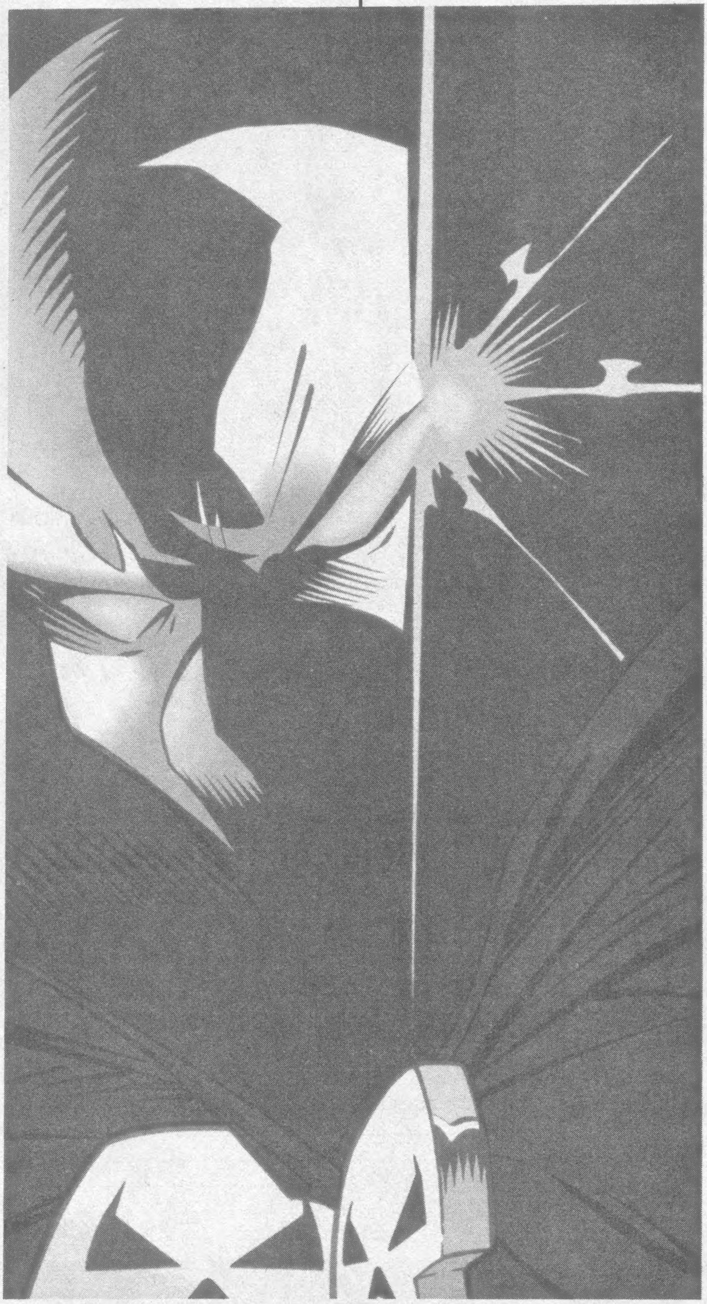
Two full-pagers from the video mini-comic by Terry and Todd. Jason Pearson and Karl Story also worked on the art.

"He was looking for someone to come work for him."

man behind one of comics' hottest artists is and his insights into Todd McFarlane, the comics industry, and the future of Spawn.

JIM SALICRUP: *How'd it all begin? How'd you hook up with Todd? What is Todd McFarlane Productions? What's it all mean? Tell us everything.*

TERRY FITZGERALD: Back in early 1988, Todd had come down to the local high school of this shithole little town we lived in called Duncan. He was trying to get someone out of the art class to do some blacks and assisting. I'd been out of school for two years at that point. My girlfriend I was seeing at the time was in one of these art classes. She said this guy is supposed to be the hottest comic-book artist, blah, blah, blah. He was looking for someone to come work for him. This was on a Friday. He was giving an interview on the following Monday. Considering she didn't have a car, I had to drive her. I thought, since she was doing it, I might as well, too. So, the whole weekend, we did up samples and went over there. In typical Todd fashion, "I'll have you out by seven." I think it was midnight before I got out of there. We were the last ones out. He said, whoever he picked he'd phone tomorrow night at seven. So, she and I sat by the phone at seven. 7:30 came . . . eight. Nothing. Around 9:30 or 10:00, I called my girlfriend. "Did you hear anything?" "No." I told her to go to school tomorrow and find out who it was. I was curious who Todd picked. It was about 11:30. We were all sleeping in the house. The phone rings. I was living at home, and my mom comes screaming down the hallway: "Hey, Terry, one of your bloody friends for ya!" Todd: "Yeah, uh, can you come in to work around nine tomorrow?" That's how this whole tumultuous relationship began.



SPAWN ©1994 Todd McFarlane / SATAN'S SIX ©1993-94 Jack Kirby.

JIM: *So you were originally interested in becoming a comic-book artist?*

TERRY: No, I was in college then getting a Bachelor of Science. I was going to become a pharmacist.

JIM: *But, the position Todd was looking for was someone to help him with his artwork?*

TERRY: It was. I hadn't actually drawn anything for five years up to that point. It was just stuff I did that weekend.

JIM: *What kind of stuff did you put together?*

TERRY: I did samples. I did drawings of people. Nothing really too fancy. Definitely not comics.

JIM: *Why do you think you got the job? Did anyone else apply?*

TERRY: There were ten people. One, the dog liked me and nobody else. And, I liked talking. And three, I was the only one out of school.

JIM: *What happened to that girlfriend?*

TERRY: She canned my ass about three days later.

JIM: *What did you do once you got the job?*

TERRY: At that point, Todd was working on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. That was during the bi-weekly period. Lots of running to Federal Express in the car doing 80 mph in order to get there in time.

JIM: *Eventually he left SPIDER-MAN. There was a period there when nobody knew what Todd was doing.*

TERRY: When Todd was between books? I worked with him from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN from the bi-weeklies through #320. I felt I had to go

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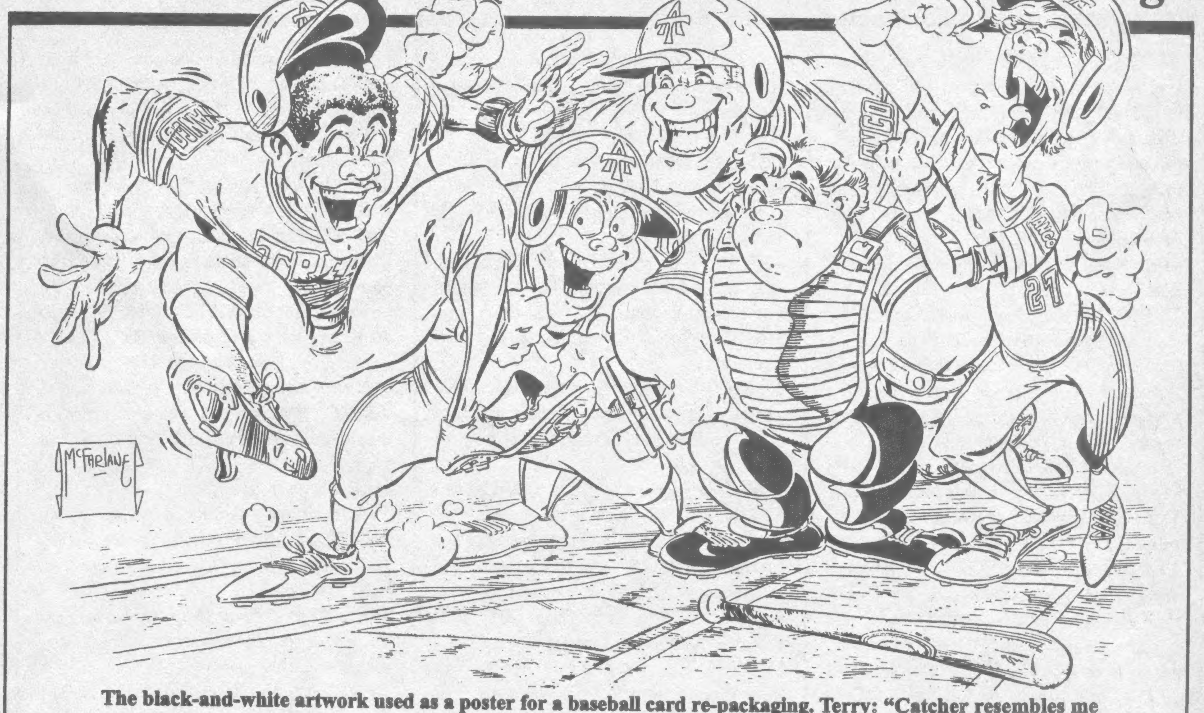
"He was a wild man. I spent the first two weeks laughing."



The black-and-white artwork used as a poster for a baseball card re-packaging. Terry: "Catcher resembles me *very* closely!" Art is, of course, by Todd McFarlane.

on and get some schooling. I actually applied to the local college I had been attending beforehand and took some art classes. I went on and got a diploma in graphic arts, a diploma in visual arts, and a degree in associated arts from that college. Throughout that time, I did some work for him, mostly more off than on. At that time, he was doing some work for SPIDER-MAN.

JIM: *What did you think of Todd during that period? What was your impression of him?*

TERRY: He was a complete wild man. I spent the first two weeks working for him laughing. Everything that came out of his mouth was funny to me. "Can you pass me the eraser?" Ha ha ha ha ha. It was the goofiest thing. Anybody who knows Todd knows he's funny, even unintentionally. He's good with jokes. We used to listen to this Christian program on AM radio which is funny because Todd is an atheist. I'd listen to it and hear Todd go, "Oh, shit! That's absolutely #$%&* bullshit." He'd banter back and forth with this guy on the radio. It was pretty hysterical. During the bi-weekly process, it was tough stuff. I'd show up at eight. He'd have been there for a few hours already. We'd work until 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon. I'd make a FedEx run. I'd come back. He'd work through most of the night. I'd come back the next morning and there he'd be again. Incidentally, at one point we actually made it on the radio.

JIM: *I think you're a graduate of the Ed McMahon School of Business Acumen. All you do is, if you laugh at the boss's jokes long and hard enough, you've a career for life.*

TERRY: That was probably it. I was the only one sick and twisted enough to understand his jokes during the interview. Everyone else just sat there and thought, "This guy's a freak." I thought, "Cool."

JIM: *You went off to college. Then what happened?*

TERRY: I'd talk to him on and off. Once every couple of months I'd phone. Like everybody else, he'd brush me off. "Yeah, I'm working, I'm busy." That was during the SPIDER-MAN stuff. He was always working. Then, out of the blue, I got home from college one day. It must have been November or December, 1991. There's a message on the answering machine. "I got a question. I got some work for you. Give me a call." So I phone. He wanted to do these hockey trading cards for the NHL. He didn't have enough time to do preliminary sketches and design work. I did ten or twenty of these.

JIM: *Designs or drawings?*

TERRY: Designs.

JIM: *You're sure you're not secretly the real Todd McFarlane?*

TERRY: A lot of people assume that. No, that magical stuff only comes out of one hand and it sure isn't mine. So, I did the design work for the cards. Unfortunately, they never really got that far. It was at the time when they were expanding and the league wasn't interested in one more card line. But, it had a great hook. A picture of a player on the front and an artistic rendition on the back. That was late '91. Nothing really happened after that until I got a phone call around late March/early April 1992. Todd said he quit SPIDER-MAN. He was doing this new book called SPAWN. He gave me a little background on that. He was moving to Portland. I said, if I'm ever down in California, I'll drop by. He said, "No, I was actually thinking you could come and work for me." That was the sales ticket. I wanted to come in five minutes.

JIM: *You must have had a lot of other interesting prospects.*

TERRY: Oh, yeah. Everyone in my class was worried. You get that sick feeling that you're done with school and have to go out into the real world and get a job. Here, literally two months before I was supposed to graduate, I was offered a job. I was very thankful.

JIM: *How old are you?*

TERRY: 25. It was two years ago. I finished my schooling on a Friday. The following day I had all my crap packed in a van and I was on my way down to Portland. I left my girlfriend. I didn't see her for a year. I started off doing what I was doing before: some blacks, answering the phone, that sort of thing. All of a sudden, this company grew immensely.

JIM: *Todd McFarlane Productions?*

"My Dad would love to do 1/10 of what I've done."

TERRY: Yeah. Whereas before, Todd sent his artwork to Marvel and Marvel took care of the lettering, the coloring, the printing and all that, suddenly it was us, the company, who had to deal with the letterers, the colorists, and printing. All of a sudden, I had to crack the books. That became my next big title.

JIM: *What was that period like for you and Todd?*

TERRY: Chaos. I knew something about the printing industry from college. But, at that point, I was thrown in there. I had to learn that whole process. I'm sure editors are gradually brought into this; I had a week. It was a little hairy and scary. Now, everyone at Ronald's loves me.

JIM: *Is there much interacting with Todd McFarlane Productions and Image?*

TERRY: Basically, they have no idea what we do and we have no idea what they do. We live this beautiful vicarious marriage. Day-to-day, they have no idea what we do. We may get a fax from them or they may phone to tell us when our book goes to press. They'll be off by three weeks. I could spend all day on the phone with them. We handle everything at this office besides the actual solicitation and accounting.

JIM: *What do you do now?*

TERRY: Besides listening to Todd harangue me all day?

JIM: *Are you involved in some of the TV and toy projects?*

TERRY: I helped negotiate the movie deal, the video game deal, the TV animation (co-producing).

JIM: *Give us all the details. How'd it all happen?*

TERRY: To switch from comics to video games is an easy one. There's a lot of cross-pollination between the two of them.

JIM: *Who's going to do the video game?*

TERRY: There were a couple of companies interested. I ended up going to one of these consumer electronics shows. I walked around getting everyone's business card, and sent them off some SPAWN books and a cover letter. I got a lot of "No" replies, and a couple of "This book is too Satanic for a video game." We narrowed it down to two companies. Todd wanted approval from one company over sound, etc. The other company, we went back and forth for eight months. Finally, I went down to L.A. for a dinner meeting. In two and a half hours, we set up the whole deal.

JIM: *What do you think of being able to make all these deals?*

TERRY: The only problem is, five years from now, what to do next? It gets to the point where these people are 40 or 50 years old. I look at my Dad. He'd love to do 1/10 of what I've done at 25.

JIM: *Have you been thinking of your own stuff or sticking with the Todd look?*

TERRY: I think if I ever left here, it would be too boring. It's too much fun here, zany.

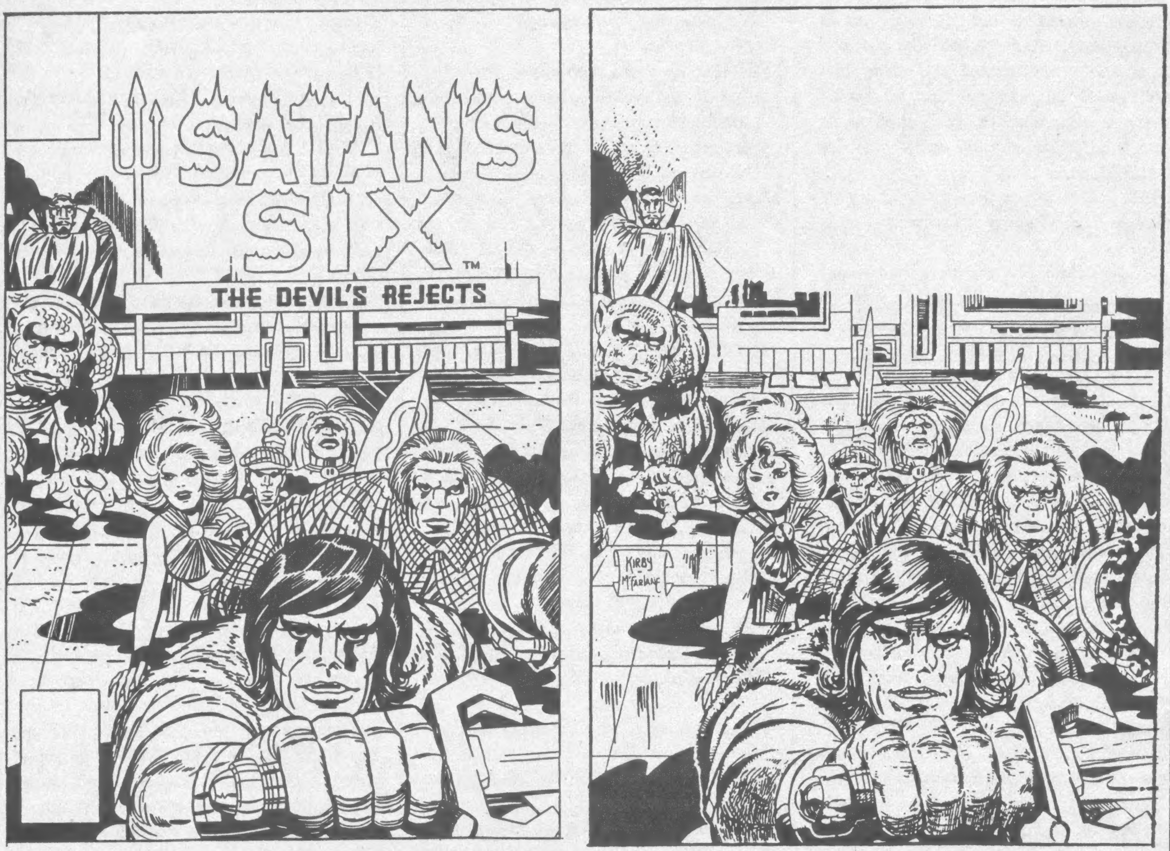
JIM: *So, you're a lifer.*

TERRY: I can't say that. I can't even say that Clinton will remain a Democrat. Todd says, if I don't leave him one day, he'll fire me.

JIM: *What do you think is the biggest thing you've learned since you've been with this guy?*

TERRY: When I moved down here, I thought it would just be, do this and do that. But, as the months went by, there

An "A-B Comparison" of Jack Kirby's first SATAN'S SIX cover, published by Topps Comics. Left, inked by Mike Royer. Right — the version that was actually used — inked by Todd McFarlane.



SATAN'S SIX ©1993 Jack Kirby

"He's a first-time director. It's actually Todd."

was another job description laid under the foundation of all the other ones. It's pretty exhilarating when, one day you're answering the phones and doing a little hard work to get out a comic book (which is a cool thing in itself, that you've had a hand in something that will be around after you pass on), the next week you're going to L.A. to meet with **Quincy Jones** to do a project. I'm on the Columbia Studios and Paramount lots meeting all sorts of people. It's pretty intimidating.

JIM: *I'm sure Todd must have given you some specific advice on how to handle these people.*

TERRY: Screw them all. Go in, don't be intimidated, and ask for everything. If they don't give it to you, tell them to shove it up their ass.

JIM: *So there's no pressure working for Todd.*

TERRY: No, not at all. You're meeting with the president of production at Columbia who meets with, maybe, two people a day and has producers begging to get into his door. We say, "This is what we want to do. If you don't like it, there are seven other studios. We can go to them."

JIM: *You must have liked that.*

TERRY: Yeah.

JIM: *Where's the movie at now?*

TERRY: At New Line. It looks like we'll be settling on a writer soon.

JIM: *You're not going to write it?*

TERRY: No. But, the coolest thing about Hollywood is that you get to hug everyone. But, it's like hug-stab-hug-stab.

JIM: *But, the New Line boys are different.*

TERRY: The COO, **Michael Deluca,** is a comics fan. He's always liked comics and loved SPAWN. Better than having an executive attached at a major studio who hadn't heard about SPAWN or hadn't read it, saying, "So, Spawn's this, like, surfer dude from California who turns into this dead guy." Uh, yeah. Hopefully, by the time Spawn hits the screen, there won't be this YELLOW SUBMARINE mentality.

JIM: *Who'd you like to see play Spawn?*

TERRY: Al Simmons? I'd love **Ice-T.** But, whether or not he can play the emotional role . . . but he'd be good for the violence.

JIM: *Who does Todd want?*

TERRY: Anybody. I read a lot of screenplays right now for potential candidates.

JIM: *How involved is Todd going to be in the movie?*

TERRY: Everything from picking the screenwriter to helping him write the screenplay, editing and such.

Photograph of Terry and Todd — holding the unprinted hockey cards by McFarlane — circa late 1991.

JIM: *Tell me this isn't true. I've seen this in every movie. No matter how good the first draft is, they say this is great and let's go to the second draft. Therefore, you or I should write the first draft. After they have that, they'll shop around for a director. The director's going to say, I love the character but I don't like this script. It would be better if you or I wrote it and saved them a lot of money and then find a director who wouldn't want to do the script.*

TERRY: But, you've missed one important thing. We already have a director attached.

JIM: *Is he going to write it?*

TERRY: He's already written the opening treatment, which is a 12-page working synopsis of what's going to happen.

JIM: *Are you happy with this guy?*

TERRY: Yes.

JIM: *Is this a secret director?*

TERRY: He's a first-time director. It's actually Todd. He's going to use an 8-mm. handicam.

JIM: *Will the director write it himself?*

TERRY: We want a screenwriter who's liked by everybody.

JIM: *Will there be any big-name stars in the movie?*

TERRY: Todd would love **Halley Berry** to play Wanda.

JIM: *That's a good choice. I think after THE FLINTSTONES, she'll be available.*

TERRY: Isn't she supposed to be the seductress in that?

JIM: *I think she'll need a comeback after THE FLINTSTONES.*

TERRY: We're all interested in how well or poor it'll do.

JIM: *Some people who've seen it are calling it ISHTAR II.*

TERRY: I'm sure the special effects are wonderful. The guy who did the dinosaurs for JURASSIC PARK did Dino. Incidentally, there will be a lot of computer graphics work for SPAWN.

JIM: *Who's going to do that?*

TERRY: There are these three guys who work for Industrial Light and Magic. They started up their own production company. All of these guys have worked on the biggest special-effects movie of the past decade. They'll come on the movie, one producing, one directing, and one generating the Spawn character in his full glory in the computer.

JIM: *Is that what I saw in one of those HERO videos?*

TERRY: Still to this day, we get people calling, saying, "I saw the work that ILM did on the Spawn. It was great." I know they did some drawings but they haven't done any 3-D stuff on the computer or any

“We started this toy company 6-10 months ago.”

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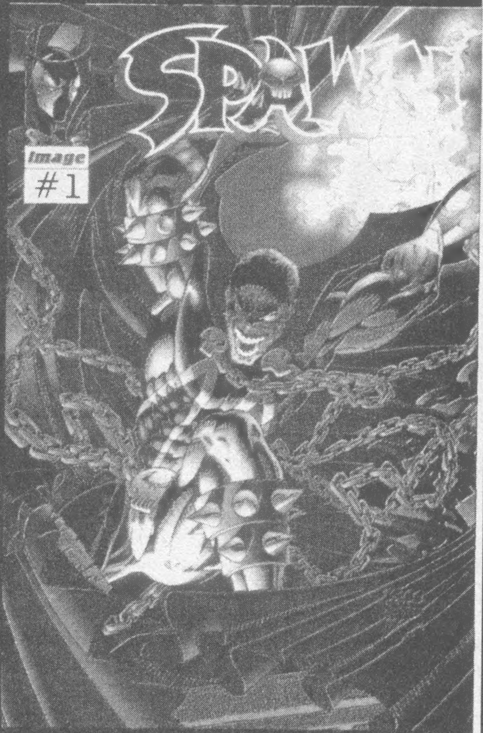

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TERRY FITZGERALD- DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT
TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS, INC.

modeling. They're like, “We saw this HERO thing.” No, that was some 17-year-old kid from Jersey.

JIM: *What does the future hold for you and Todd McFarlane Productions?*

TERRY: We've started this toy company. It started 6-10 months ago. Mattel basically signed up to make some toys. Toys seemed like the next logical step. Todd has a four-corner plan, the four major points: video games, toys, movies, TV. A lot of negotiations went on with Mattel. Playmates were involved at a point. But, they found the book to be too dark and Satanic.

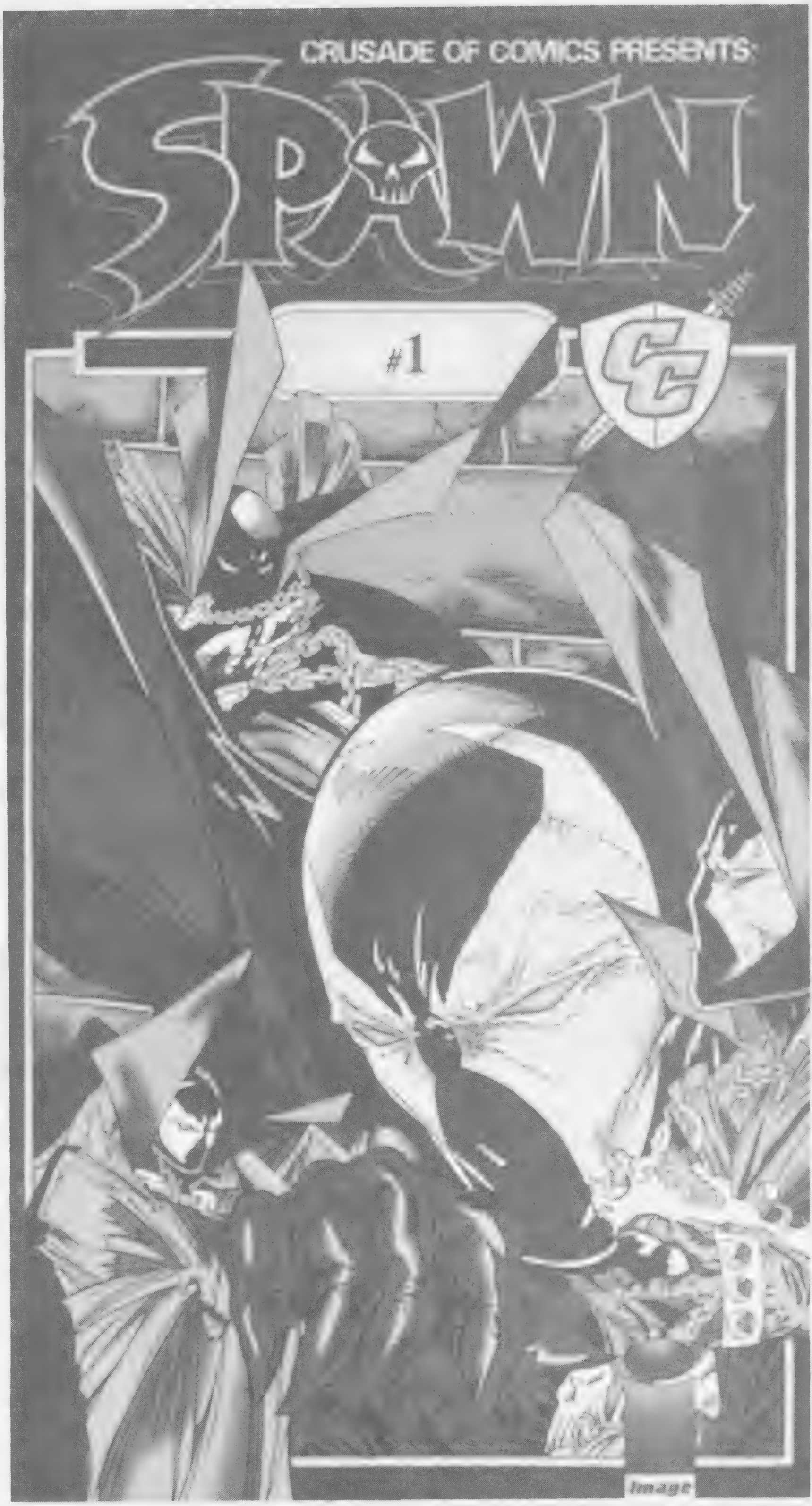
JIM: *How'd you come to the point to decide to do the toys yourself?*

TERRY: It came to the point where we had Playmates bow out and Mattel want to go slow and easy. Todd wanted to go head first. We started making some phone calls around. There was a guy who owns Sabre, **Paul Burke.** He could help lead this off the ground. This was around Thanksgiving of last year. By January 8th, we were in New York at the Toy Fair with prototypes and a booth. All the buyers loved it. The Toys-R-Us buyer, who had an appointment on Friday, came up on Tuesday after word-of-mouth said this would be one of the hot properties of the year. So far, we've had a great response and great numbers from Toys-R-Us and others. Come this fall, there'll be Spawn toys from K-Mart to KB and Target.

JIM: *Is this still exciting to you? Are you still having fun?*

TERRY: Every morning I wake up and think, thank God I'm not a garbageman.

"We've had great response from Toys-R-Us and others."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For those of you who haven't yet purchased the video, here's the cover from the mini-comic that comes enclosed with the interview. The mini-comic was written by Terry, who also arranged the cover artwork.

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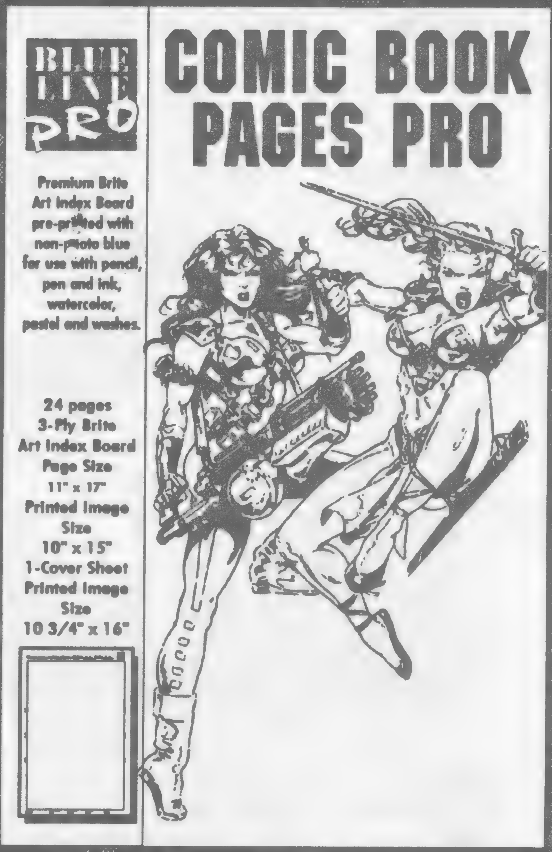
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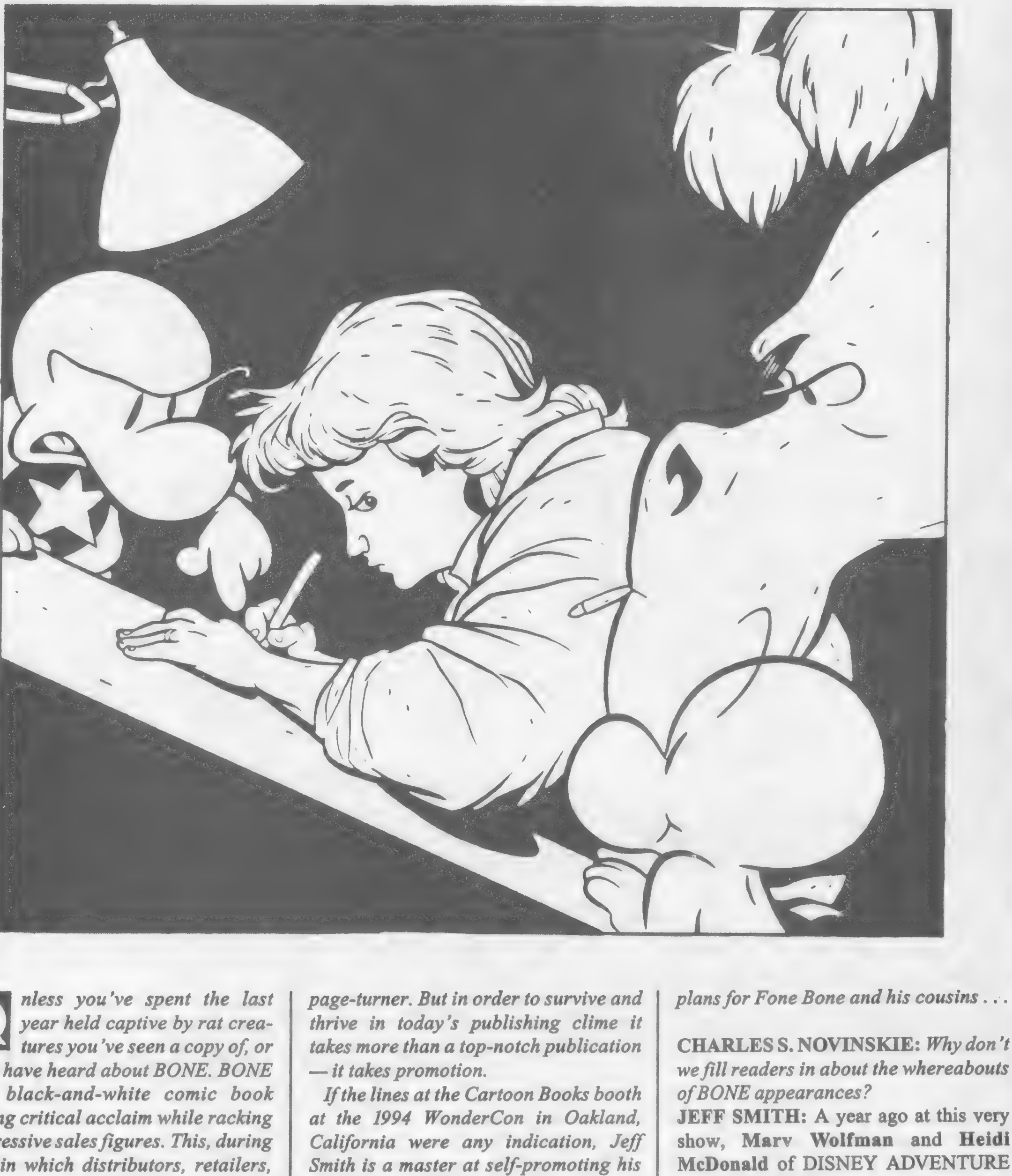
‘Heidi McDonald asked for a story for DISNEY DIGEST.’



All artwork accompanying this interview TM & ©1994 Jeff Smith

Unless you’ve spent the last year held captive by rat creatures you’ve seen a copy of, or at least have heard about BONE. BONE is the black-and-white comic book receiving critical acclaim while racking up impressive sales figures. This, during a time in which distributors, retailers, and publishers alike have been watching sales figures take unprecedented drops.

Jeff Smith, publisher and creator of BONE under the flagship of Cartoon Books, is the mastermind behind the book’s success. The story of three Bone cousins, Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone, lost in a valley filled with both wonderful and terrifying creatures, is a Pogoesque adventure of pure reading pleasure. From Gran’ma Ben to Thorn to the repulsive but sometimes hilarious rat creatures, BONE is a real page-turner. But in order to survive and thrive in today’s publishing clime it takes more than a top-notch publication — it takes promotion.

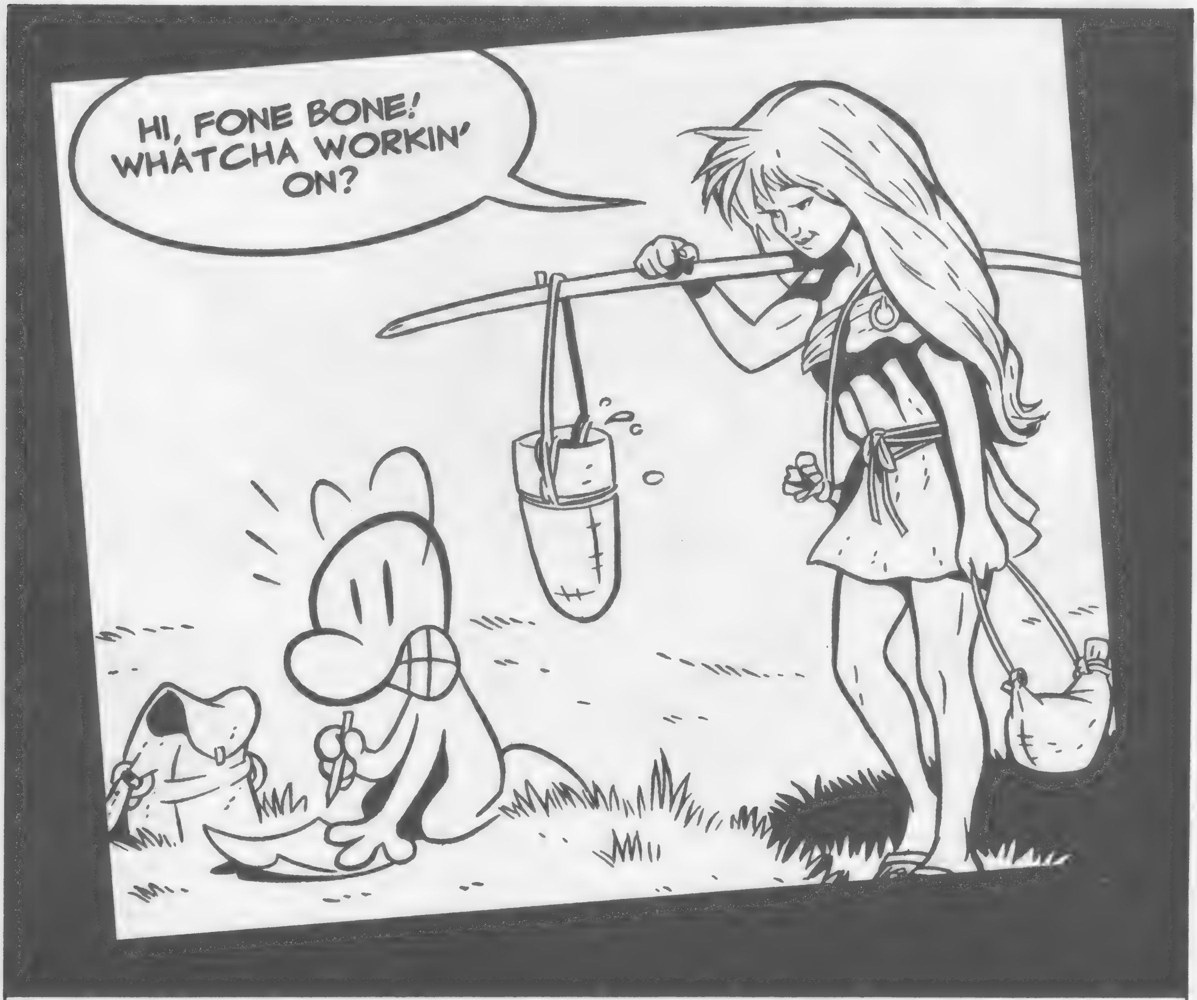
If the lines at the Cartoon Books booth at the 1994 WonderCon in Oakland, California were any indication, Jeff Smith is a master at self-promoting his properties. Jeff took time out from signing autographs to fill us in on future plans for Fone Bone and his cousins . . .

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *Why don’t we fill readers in about the whereabouts of BONE appearances?*

JEFF SMITH: A year ago at this very show, **Marv Wolfman** and **Heidi McDonald** of DISNEY ADVENTURE COMIC DIGEST asked me if I would do a BONE story for the DISNEY DIGEST.

JEFF SMITH

"I own and retain all of the rights to BONE."


HI, FONE BONE! WHATCHA WORKIN' ON?

I told Marv it would be fine with the understanding that I own and retain all of the rights to BONE and that I have the rights to reprint the story. Marv agreed to my demands including that my copyright line be prominently displayed next to the name BONE.

Marv called and suggested that we prime everyone for the next BONE story I was doing for DISNEY ADVENTURE by reprinting the first issue of BONE in the magazine. Marv's idea was to serialize the first issue as three eight-page stories. The first two installments are already out. We also had **Tom Luth** color the stories. I have to say that the entire experience was positive and it was a lot of fun working with those guys.

CHARLES: *It seems that word of mouth has given this book a real boost.*

JEFF: Even before the DISNEY ADVENTURE book came out, just word of it set a lot of things in motion. I did a special for HERO ILLUSTRATED and a card for WIZARD magazine. It really made things start hopping.

CHARLES: *The fact that the distribution of DISNEY ADVENTURE is widespread should really give a lot of exposure and bring in new readers for BONE. The magazine is found in every supermarket check-out line in the country. I would have to guess that circulation figures for DISNEY DIGEST are over a million.*

JEFF: I don't know the exact figures, but I do know that the issue that had the first installment of BONE in it also featured Mighty Morphin Power Rangers on the cover. I'd say that was a lucky break for me. Marv figures easily three million people saw that issue. I'm just now starting to get feedback from people that are coming up to me saying that they've seen BONE for the first time in DISNEY ADVENTURE.

CHARLES: *I think I'm pretty safe in saying that everyone within the comics industry is aware of BONE. What the exposure in DISNEY ADVENTURES is going to do is to give the book the much-needed exposure to readers outside of the industry. That's where the growth will come from.*

JEFF: I don't think it'll do anything dramatic right away. What it will do is plant the seed within the general public. Hopefully that will get a whole new group of readers involved with BONE — with reading comics for that matter.

CHARLES: *When does the new BONE story run in DISNEY ADVENTURES?*

JEFF: The new story will be in the August issue. It is a little story revolving around Fone and Phoney Bone. It was fun because I had no agenda for that story that I had to follow. When I reprint the entire BONE ADVENTURES trade paperback I'll insert it there.

CHARLES: *Also I recall some step-by-step layout pages for BONE that were printed in Caliber Press' NEGATIVE BURN anthology earlier in the year.*

JEFF: That came about because of the Disney deal. It took about a year to put the

“It never occurred to me to go to a publisher.”

Disney deal together. I told **Joe Pruett** that he could re-run the DISNEY ADVENTURE story in NEGATIVE BURN so that a greater portion of comic-book readers could see the story. Unfortunately, my deal with Disney was that even though I could reprint the story, I had to wait a year from publication in DISNEY ADVENTURES before I could reprint it. I didn't want NEGATIVE BURN to wait that long because they had already sort of scheduled me for the book. I told Joe that it would be interesting to see how I developed the story and the page layout.

CHARLES: *What significance, if any, does the name “Bone” have?*

JEFF: Actually, none. A lot of people try to put some significance or meaning to the word, but there really isn't any. It was a name I came up with as a kid. I did get an interesting letter from one reader that wanted me to know what the Klingon word for Bone was. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *When did you first seriously consider self-publishing BONE?*

JEFF: I had a little experience with a comic-strip syndicate. I really didn't like the way the editor-to-creator relationship worked. I went into a comic-book store in the late 1980s and I saw that there was a real market for comics. I own my own animation studio and back then we were busy making television commercials on a work-for-hire basis. We wanted to do little shorts, sort of like Bugs Bunny shorts. Unfortunately, there just wasn't a market for it. That's when I went into the comics shop.

It was interesting to go into a comic store and see how many independent publishers there were. I sort of decided at the time that I wanted to get into comic-book publishing. It never occurred to me to go to a publisher and offer my material. I had already done that with a comic strip and there was no way I was going to sell my creations to a publisher. I wanted to create my characters and retain my rights.

CHARLES: *When did BONE #1 actually come out?*

JEFF: Issue #1 came out in July of 1991. It was very near the time that **Todd McFarlane's** SPIDER-MAN #1 came out. It wasn't the best of timing as far as getting noticed. I just didn't have a prayer.

CHARLES: *Do you still remember the print run on the first issue?*

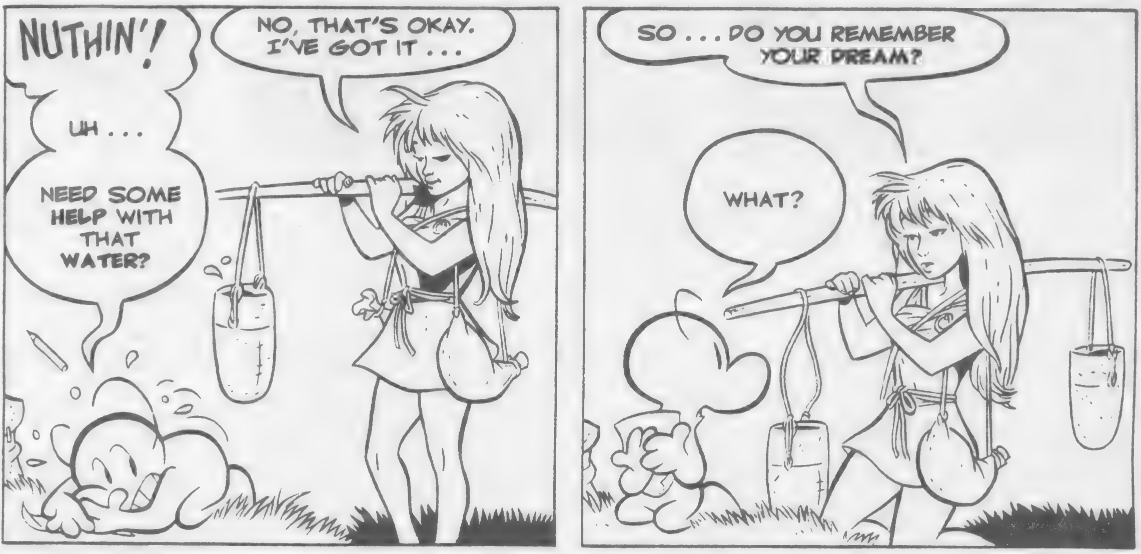
JEFF: Sure. The orders from distributors were about 2,300. I printed 3,000 copies.

CHARLES: *And nearly three years later BONE #1 is now in a number of printings.*

JEFF: BONE #1 is now in its seventh printing.

CHARLES: *I notice that you have some pins and shirts and such. What else do you have planned as far as merchandising BONE?*

JEFF: I just got a prototype for the cold cast figurine of Bone. It really, really looks fabulous. We have people coming up to our booth and they're really going crazy over the prototype. Master sculptor **Randy Bowen** did the piece and it's fabulous!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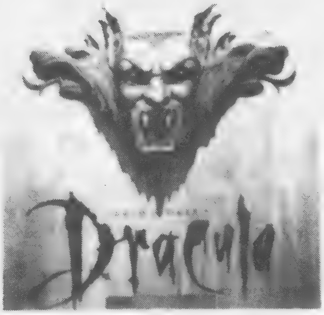

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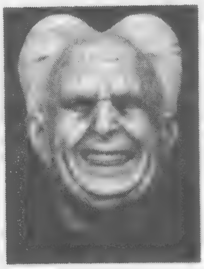

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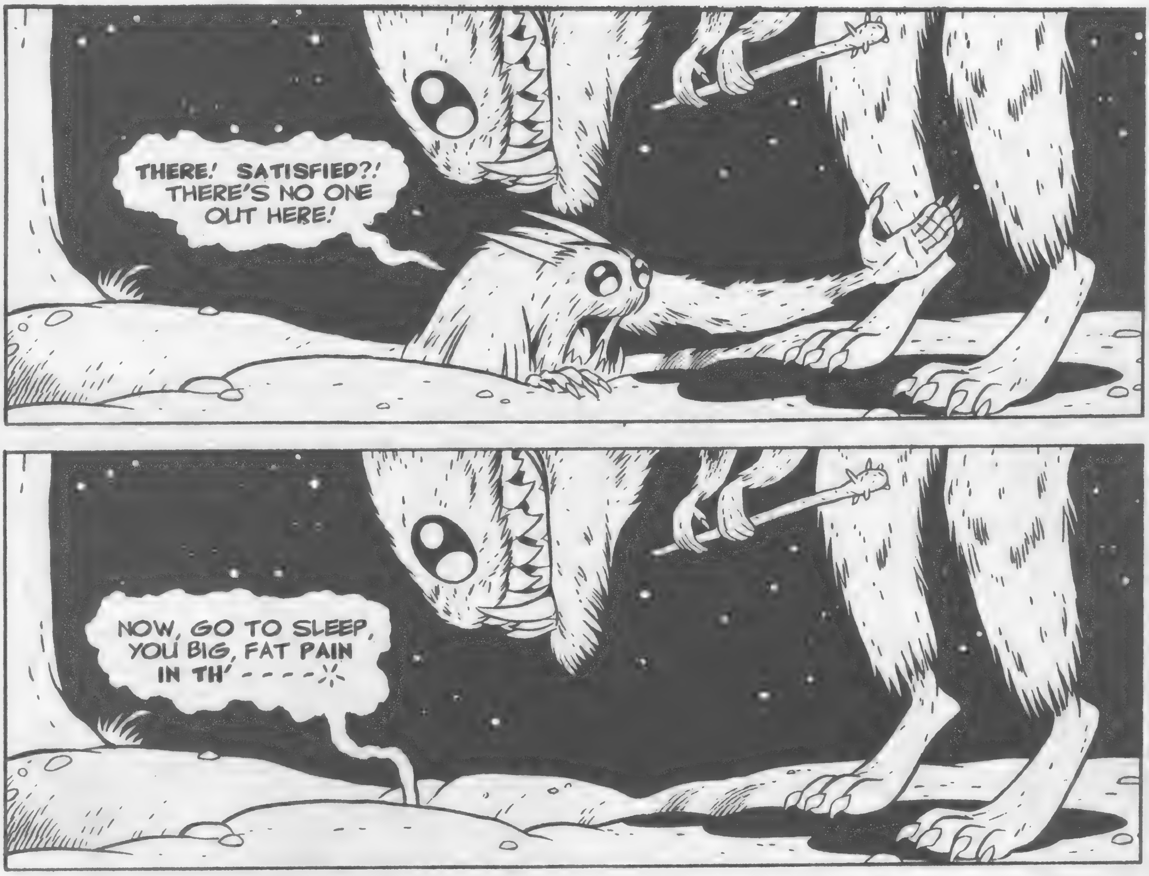
"I'm just dabbling with merchandising, doing what I like."

CHARLES: *What will the quantity of these statues be?*

JEFF: Basically it will be cast to order, and that's it. Whatever people order, that will be it. The Bone figure is the first in a series. The second character will be the dragon. We've scaled it so that Fone bone will be proportionate to the dragon statue. I'm just dabbling with the merchandising and I'm doing what I really like. I actually license out the merchandising end of it. I have approval on everything. Like the shirts for example. I have the final approval on all of the designs for the shirts. Planet Studios is doing a great job with my products and they really know how to market the material. I mean, they came up with the idea to do a Ted the Bug pin. I thought it was a lousy idea. I mean, I designed the first pin, which had the word BONE on it along with the characters. But a Ted the Bug pin, I told them it wouldn't work. I mean, unless you read the series, you wouldn't know what the pin was. They were thinking the right way about it because they felt that anyone that read and followed the series would have to have a Ted the Bug pin. And they were right.

CHARLES: *Now that you've had a taste of BONE being published in color, is there any chance of you doing your regular series in color?*


THERE! SATISFIED?! THERE'S NO ONE OUT HERE!
NOW, GO TO SLEEP, YOU BIG, FAT PAIN IN TH' - - - -

"The best book in comics is RUBBER BLANKET by Mazzucchelli."

JEFF: No, definitely not. BONE is black and white because my view of traditional comic strips is black and white. I like comics better than I do movies or television because you have to lock in to what you're reading to become a part of the story.

CHARLES: *What can readers of BONE expect as far as the storyline for the next six months to a year?*

JEFF: I've just started in a new storyline in issue #13, which is the most recent issue. I'm doing the Moby Bone storyline and I think that arc will run for awhile. At the end of this story arc I'll clear up why the rat creatures were after Phoney Bone. There's also a deeper mystery between the people in the valley and the mystery of Gran'ma Ben and the dragons and the rat people. That's a mystery that will continue to grow.

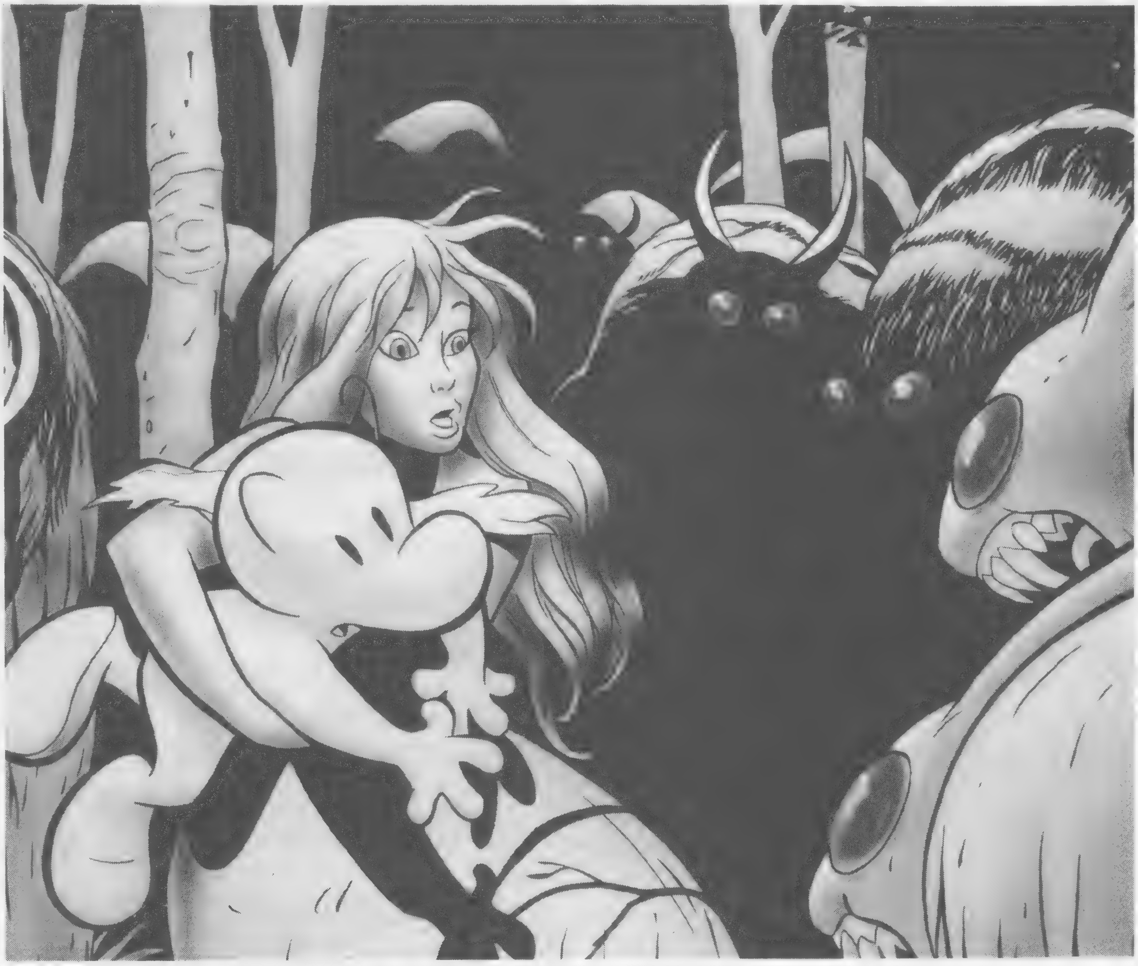
CHARLES: *Do you have a favorite character?*

JEFF: I switch. My favorite is Fone Bone. Every now and then I'm really surprised by Gran'ma Ben. I mean, she's basically Popeye with a lot of old frontier spirit. I was really surprised the most by Smiley Bone. I did BONE in college and I figured I knew all of the characters. Smiley is developing into a very complex character and I enjoy him very much — he really surprises me.

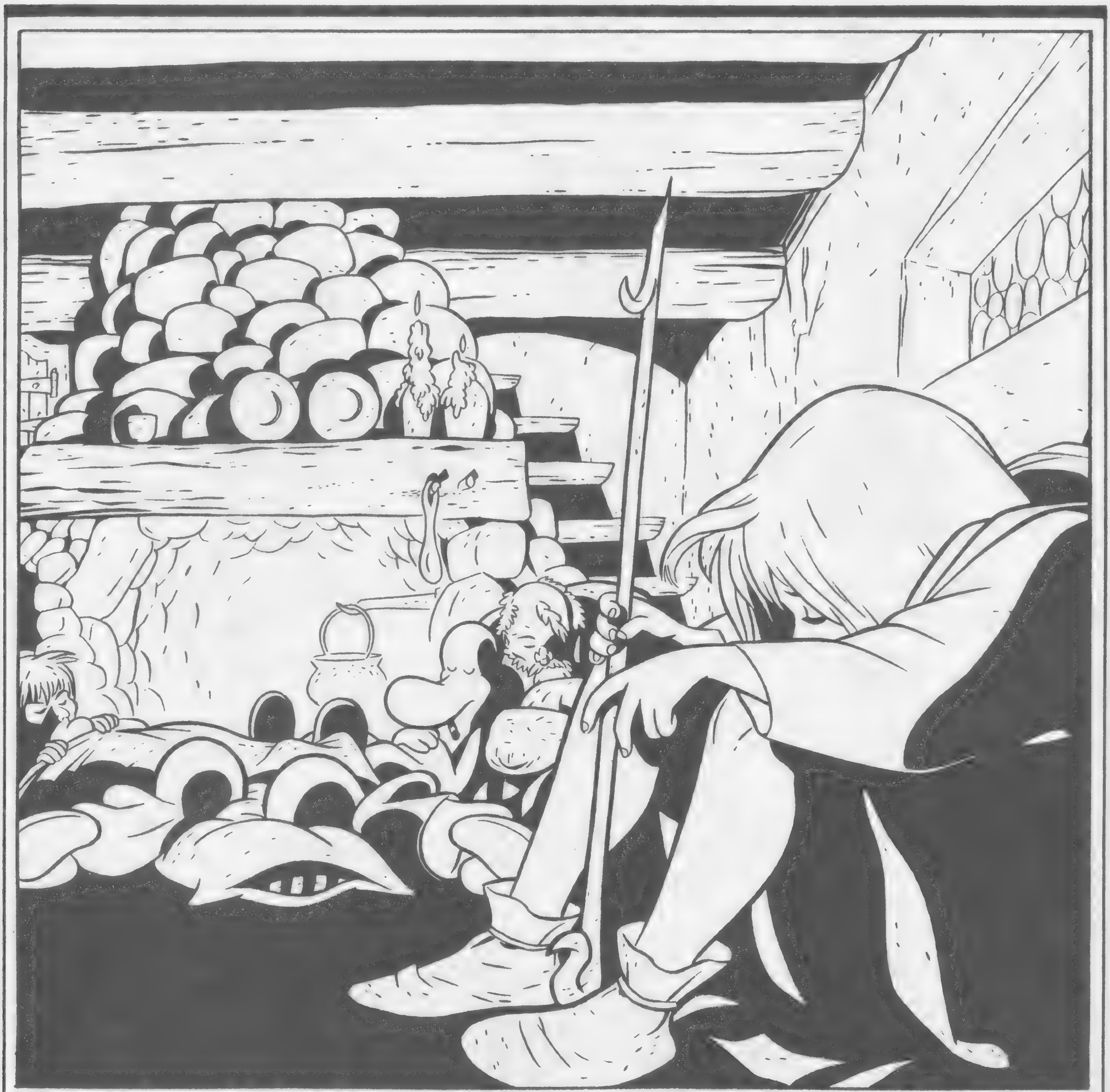
CHARLES: *How do you view comics and the comics industry today? What creators do you look up to?*

JEFF: I think the best published book in comics today is RUBBER BLANKET, by **David Mazzucchelli**. ELFQUEST is another fine example, published by **Richard** and **Wendy Pini**. There's also CEREBUS by Dave — I mean, we don't even have to say his last name. Everyone is familiar with Dave's work. Also WANDERING STAR by **Teri S. Wood.** Teri is publishing her book monthly and it has a beautiful story with great artwork. I also have to mention Image because via their separate studios they're also self-publishing. There's a real movement towards self-publishing.

I think there's a bit of confusion between self-publishing and vanity press. Vanity press is when someone sets up a publishing house and you pay them to publish your book. When you're self-publishing it's your money and you're taking all of the risk. The people we've listed, these people are making hard-core in-roads into the industry and making the industry better. When you jump out and self-publish without an editor or a company backing you, well, you're really taking chances. Self-publishing has a lot of pitfalls. Basically, you have to be prepared to be a publisher, creator, and businessman. Also, you have to be very good at all of those jobs or else you're not going to make it. The business end, the marketing end, they need help to keep your head above water. I just wanted to say that because a lot of people now come up to me and ask me about self-publishing. There are many rewards to self-publishing. I just want people to



"The center of my universe will always be the comic book."



know that there are a lot more pitfalls. It takes up a lot of your time; it's exhausting and it also takes up a lot of your money. If you do manage to make it though, the rewards will be great. I also enjoy the freedom I have. If I want to put BONE #1 back into print I just do it. Self-publishing isn't for everyone, but it is possible to make it that way.

CHARLES: *I think that a lot of publishers are taking notice because of the sales figures you're producing. BONE, which is a black-and-white title, outsells a lot of the major publishers' color titles.*

JEFF: It is really amazing. The presold sales for BONE #14 were 50,000. Because the market is so down right now my sales are high enough that it has made my book more noticeable. I'm very comfortable with my readers. Every time my numbers take a jump I wonder how much of the increase is just the hype and how much is new readers.

CHARLES: *I know that you've reprinted the first six issues into a trade paperback. Have you thought about distributing them into mainstream stores such as Waldenbooks or B. Dalton's?*

JEFF: I've had letters about it. Distributors in the mainstream have shown interest. The problem is that the bookstore market is a returnable market. That's the next step and I'm not ready yet. I'm not big enough to handle it and I would want to have control over it. I don't have the time or money to make myself a big enough publisher that I can ship books to national chains on a returnable basis. I do think about it from time to time.

CHARLES: *If you look back one year ago today I know you mentioned that you were first talking to Disney. A lot has happened to you concerning your career and BONE in the past year. What do you envision happening over the next year?*

JEFF: I don't know. There are so many paths that I can take. I just hope that a year from now there is still this much interest in the book. The center of my universe will always be the comic book and the art form. The book comes first and I want it to be as good as it can possibly be and come out on time.

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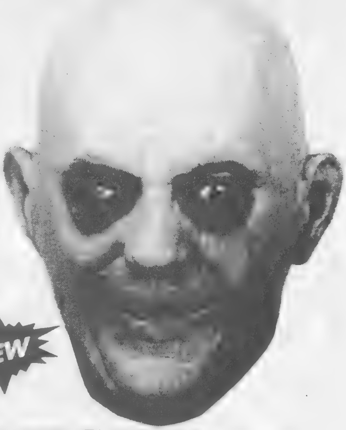

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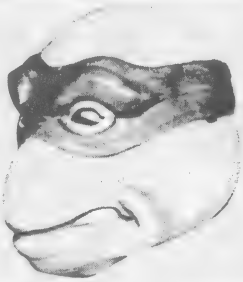

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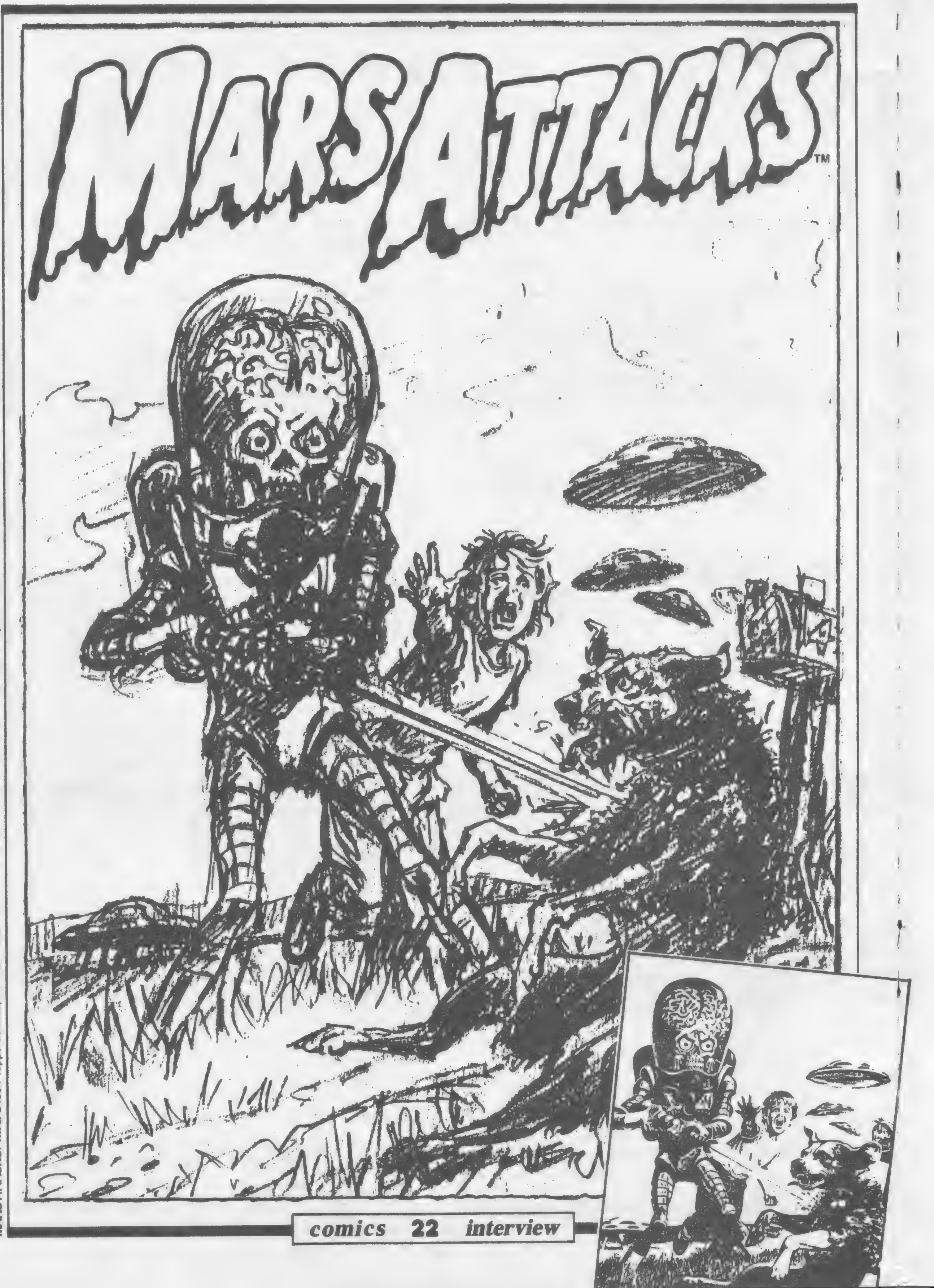
"I remember agonizing over the "Burning Flesh"



MARS ATTACKS!: TM & ©1994 Topps Comics, Inc. / CAPTAIN VICTORY & VICTORY ©1994 Jack & Rosalind "Roz" Kirby / SUPERPATRIOT TM & ©1994 Erik Larsen.

card. I had several sets, except for that damn card.”

KEITH GIFFEN

Topps Comics kicks off their summer line-up with a series of exciting titles featuring some of the hottest creators currently working in the field of comic books. Keith Giffen is involved with two of those titles, MARS ATTACKS, based on the original 1960s card phenomenon of the same name, and VICTORY, a five-issue series featuring a startling turning point in the Kirbyverse. VICTORY features the Kirby-created characters Silver Star, the Ninth Men, Teenagents, Satan's Six, and the return of Captain Victory.

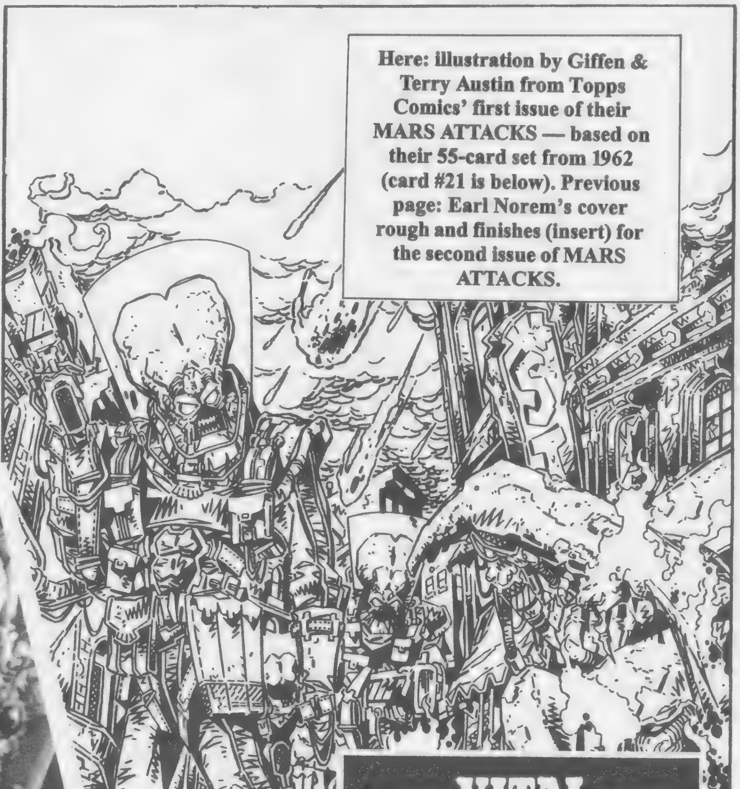
Topps Comics assistant editor Charles S. Novinskie caught up with Keith Giffen, who offered his thoughts on his involvement with Topps Comics . . .

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *I know that you were a big fan of the MARS ATTACKS cards when they were published in the early '60s. What do you remember most about the cards?*

KEITH GIFFEN: I remember agonizing over the “Burning Flesh” card. I remember working like crazy around the house to raise enough money to go back to the store to purchase more cards. I think I had several sets of the cards, except for that damn “Burning Flesh” card. I remember I had to trade for it with Chuck (the guy with no last name — that's how we knew him).

CHARLES: *Back in those days there were no comics stores or card stores, so you probably purchased the cards at a five and dime or a cigar store.*

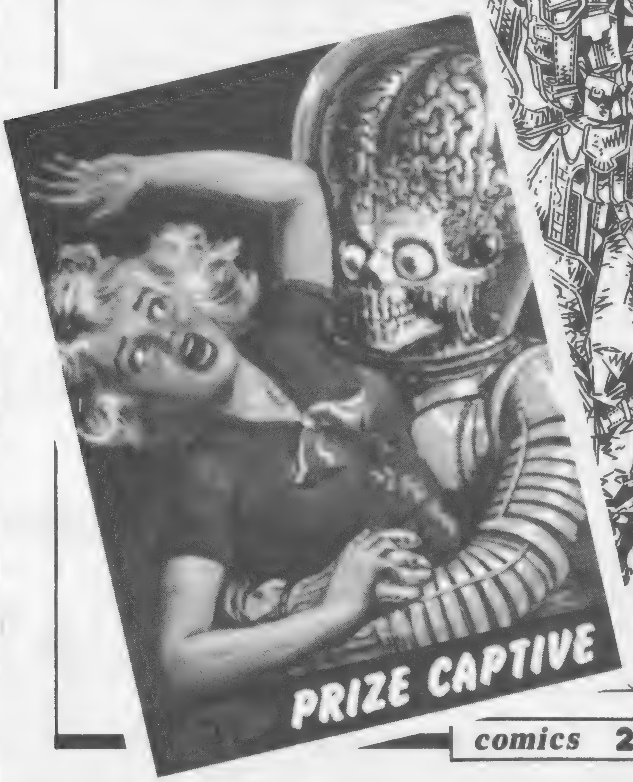
KEITH: It was a sweet shop. Actually, it was The Sweet Shoppe and as kids we used to laugh because we figured one day the guy would realized that he had spelled “shop” wrong. In our child-like way we all knew for sure that the guy didn't know he had spelled the name of his store wrong. *(Laughter.)* As a matter of fact, the place I where purchased my comics as a kid in Clifton, New Jersey, I simply referred to as the Liquor/Wine/Beer store because that was the sign on the store. To



Here: illustration by Giffen & Terry Austin from Topps Comics' first issue of their MARS ATTACKS — based on their 55-card set from 1962 (card #21 is below). Previous page: Earl Norem's cover rough and finishes (insert) for the second issue of MARS ATTACKS.

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Keith Giffen
Born: 30 Nov., 1952
Current home town: Chester, NJ
Hobbies: People pay me to do my hobbies.
Projects: AMBUSH BUG, LEGION OF SUPERHEROES, JUSTICE LEAGUE, LOBO, TRENCHER, MARS ATTACKS.



"People are going to think I'm crazy, but it seems a week

this day I don't know the real name of the store. All I know is that when I was a kid they had all of the cards and comics that I loved collecting.

CHARLES: *Do you still have all of those cards?*

KEITH: Of course! They're stored in a box somewhere and they're pretty dog-eared, but I still have all of them.

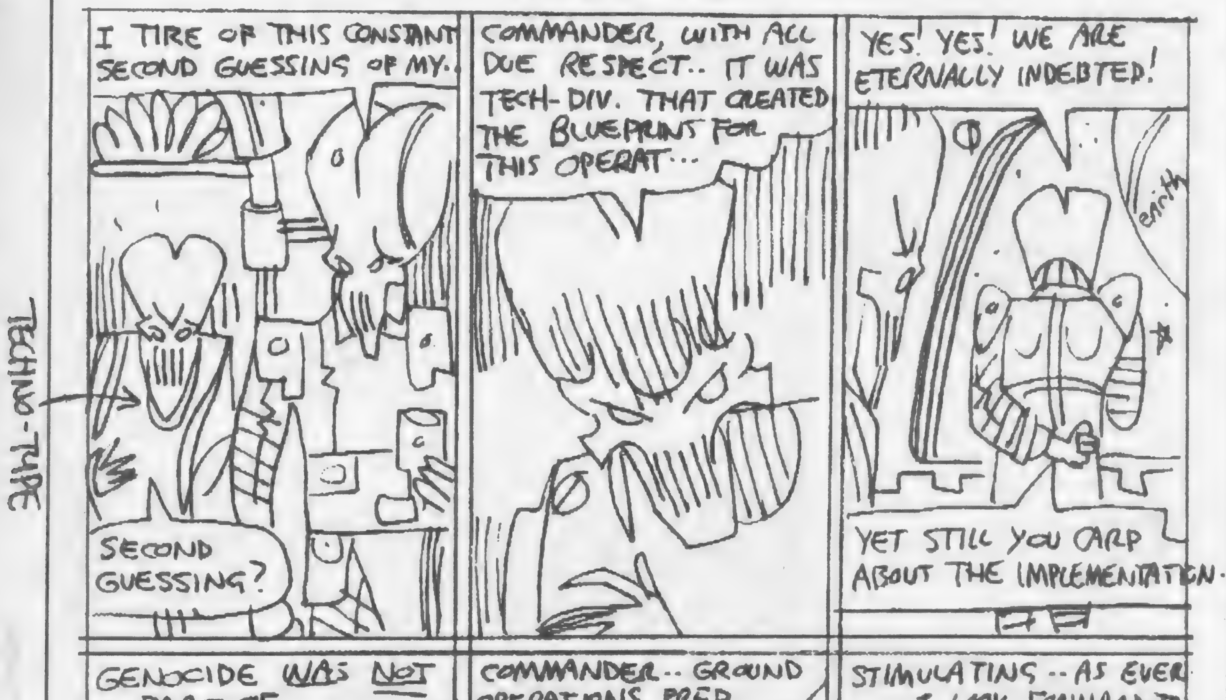
CHARLES: *The cards were pretty gory and bloody at the time.*

KEITH: Oh, you bet they were. These weren't the types of cards I'd show to my parents. They knew I was buying MARS ATTACKS cards, that was all they knew. When they would ask to see the cards I'd show them the first one or two cards, which weren't too bad, or else I'd always show them the one with the giant insects getting fried. I always tried to hide "Burning Flesh." Those cards were uniquely mine in a way my parents wouldn't understand.

CHARLES: *Topps is famous for producing those types of card sets.*

KEITH: I remember the CIVIL WAR cards that were really bloody. HORRORS OF WAR and GRUESOME GREETINGS were fine examples. I even bought a whole box of the DINOSAURS

An interesting glimpse at Keith's unique storytelling methods — in the form of layouts and rough dialogue (page 20, panels 2-7, MARS ATTACKS #1) . . .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I TIRE OF THIS CONSTANT SECOND GUESSING OF MY..
SECOND GUESSING?
COMMANDER, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT.. IT WAS TECH-DIV. THAT CREATED THE BLUEPRINT FOR THIS OPERAT...
YES! YES! WE ARE ETERNALLY INDEBTED!
YET STILL YOU CARP ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION.
GENOCIDE WAS NOT A PART OF..
COMMANDER.. GROUND OPERATIONS PREP. COMMENCE IN 7.32.
STIMULATING -- AS EVER I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING OUR DEBATE ON OUR NEW HOME.

couldn't go by without me thinking about MARS ATTACKS."

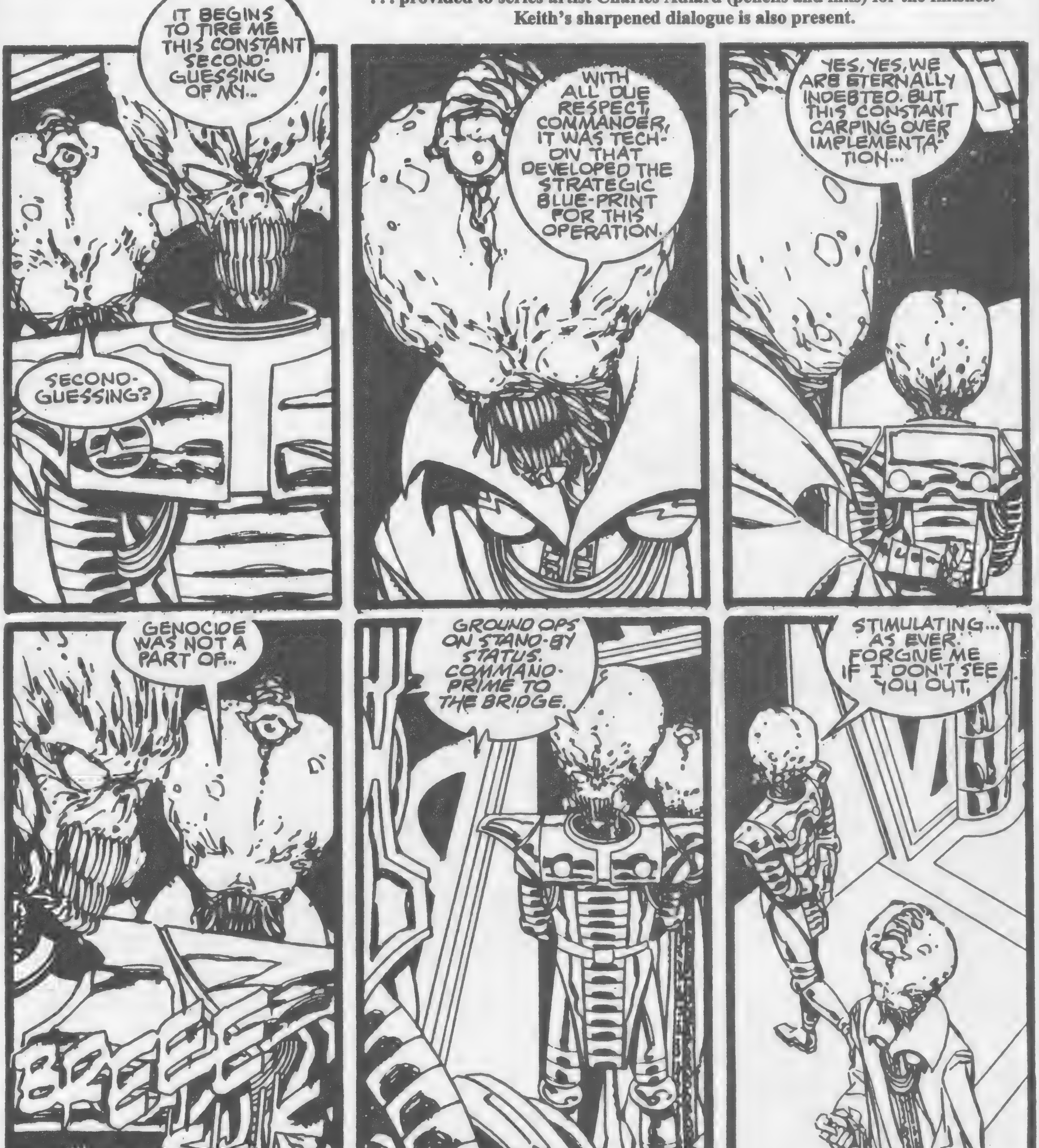
ATTACK cards and it gave me a really nostalgic rush. I'll tell you one thing about the MARS ATTACKS cards, though, there's really a lot of stuff there that I remember fondly from my childhood. The MARS ATTACKS cards really stand up to the test of time.

CHARLES: *After all these years since the cards came out it must be strange to now be working on a comic book based on the card series.*

KEITH: Actually, it's very interesting because the cards never really left my mind, even after all of these years. When the subject of MARS ATTACKS came up it wasn't like, "I remember those from when I was a kid." I've always had those cards in the back of my mind. That's how strongly the cards affected me. People are going to think I'm crazy, but it seems as if a week couldn't go by without me thinking about MARS ATTACKS. I know that **Michael Gilbert** is also a big fan of the card set.

CHARLES: *I know that when the subject of MARS ATTACKS came up at the office Dwight Zimmerman, the editor of the comic, mentioned that you were a big fan and interested in working on the series.*

. . . provided to series artist Charles Adlard (pencils and inks) for the finishes. Keith's sharpened dialogue is also present.


IT BEGINS TO TIRE ME THIS CONSTANT SECOND-GUESSING OF MY..
SECOND-GUESSING?
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, COMMANDER, IT WAS TECH-DIV THAT DEVELOPED THE STRATEGIC BLUE-PRINT FOR THIS OPERATION.
YES, YES, WE ARE ETERNALLY INDEBTED. BUT THIS CONSTANT CARPING OVER IMPLEMENTATION...
GENOCIDE WAS NOT A PART OF..
BREEEEP
GROUND OPS ON STAND-BY STATUS. COMMAND-PRIME TO THE BRIDGE.
STIMULATING... AS EVER. FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T SEE YOU OUT.

"Charles is an artist that knows the value of a line."

KEITH: Actually, what I said to Dwight was that if there was a MARS ATTACKS comic from Topps and I wasn't in some way involved with it, that I would go up to the offices in Brooklyn and castrate him with my teeth. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *I guess that's one way to get work from an editor.* (Laughter.)

KEITH: Were this a movie and me an actor it is one of those projects that I wouldn't care what I was being paid, let me do it and I'd do it for scale.

CHARLES: *We should let everyone know exactly what your involvement is with the series, since you're doing quite a few different things.*

KEITH: The main story is 22 pages and I'm actually writing that one. The main story is sort of a **Tom Clancy** suspense-like Mars Attack based in the present time. The back-ups, which I'm pencilling for the first two issues, deal with the original invasion.

CHARLES: *Charles Adlard is pencilling and inking the main story?*

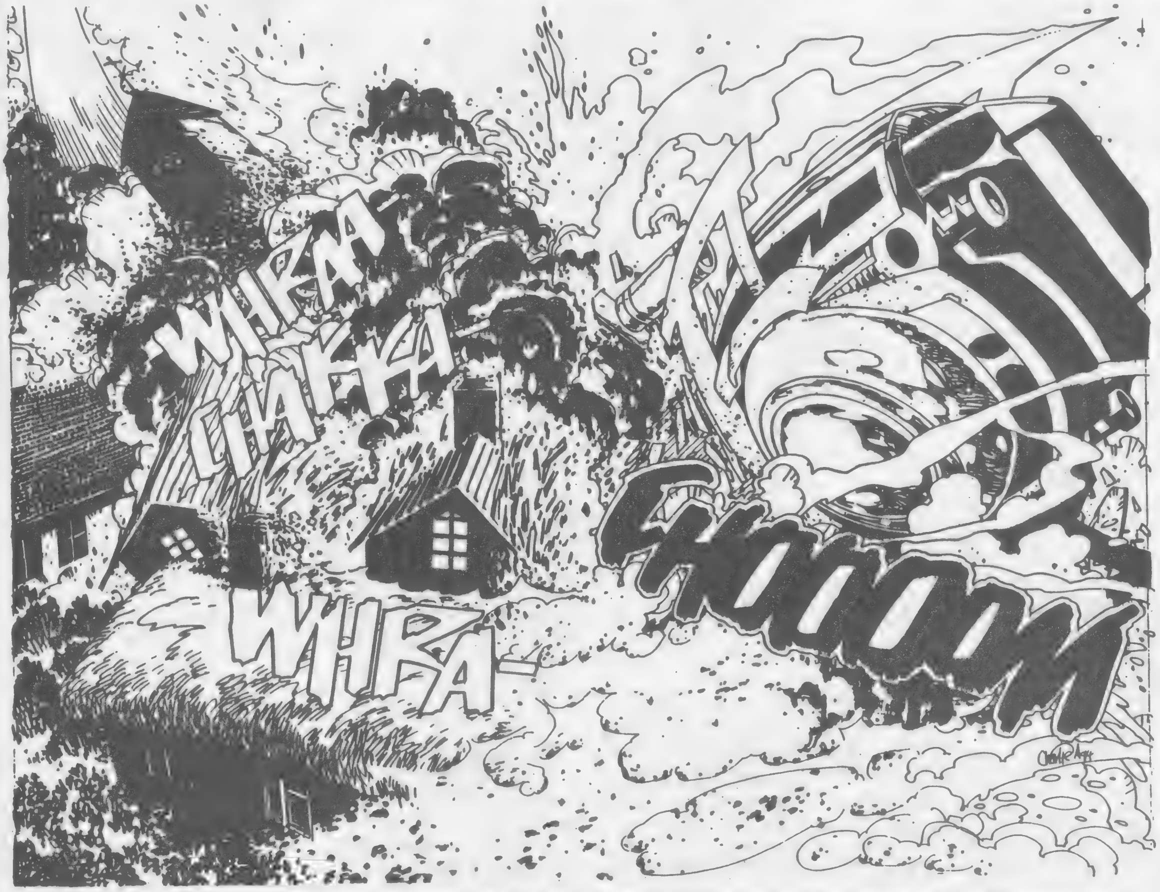
KEITH: And he's doing a marvelous job. Charles is an artist that knows the value of a line. **Adlard** has his own voice and I'm extraordinarily pleased — we'll make the kid a star! *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *There is a real excitement in the flow of the story. I love the cliffhanger at the end of the first issue when the Martians discover that they've made a fatal mistake in calculating the Earth's defenses.*

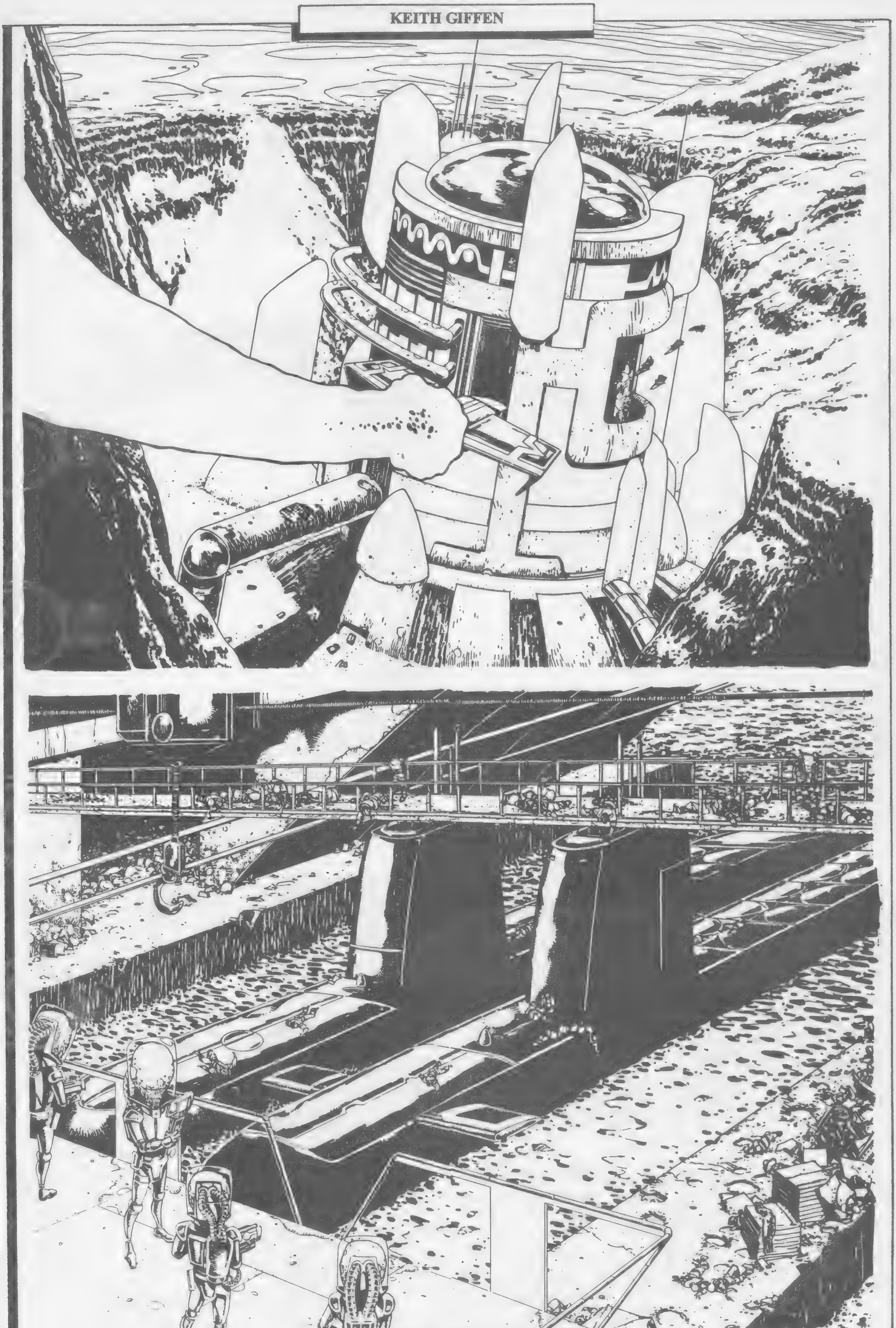
KEITH: That's one of my favorite parts also. That's part of the **Tom Clancy** feel I'm aiming for. When I say **Tom Clancy** I'm not talking about the techno-scientific detail that he puts in his novels, but rather I'm talking about thinking through the entire story. For example, if you're going to conquer Earth, what's the first thing you do? You would detonate a bomb in the atmosphere that would disrupt all of the Earth's communications. And then the story just gets more complex, and more fantastic, from there. And no matter how complex or fantastic the story gets, you have to make sure it proceeds in a logical manner. It doesn't matter how weird or bizarre, as long as the rules of cause and effect apply.

CHARLES: *We should perhaps backtrack and let the readers know more about the new stories so they don't get the impression that Topps is just redoing the story from the original cards or something like that.*

KEITH: Good point, because we're definitely not redoing the original stories as they appeared on the cards. Basically the story is, it's 1994, here comes the Martians. We have the global spanning impact of the invasion that is told through full-page splashes throughout the book. The rest of the story is told through the eyes of individuals. Some of the more fascinating stories about war were done telling the stories through smaller stories involving ordinary people on the fringes of a war or a conflict. While we get the feel of a world-wide invasion, the story is told through the eyes of a trauma nurse, a National Guardsman, a latchkey kid, and some poor soul that happens to be in the Amazon forest when a giant bug-bomb hits. Incidentally, we're also focusing on the Martian commander, who is anything but a monster. I want the readers to get



Three double-page spreads from MARS ATTACKS by Adlard. Keith: "Adlard has his own voice and I'm extraordinarily pleased — we'll make this kid a star!"



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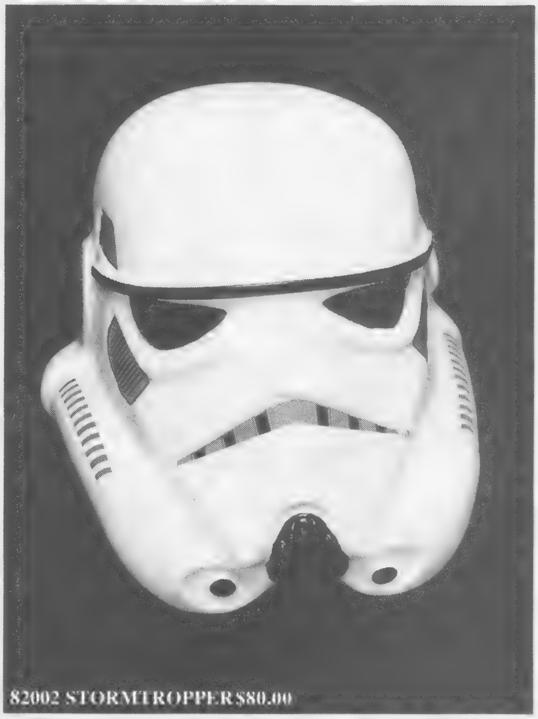

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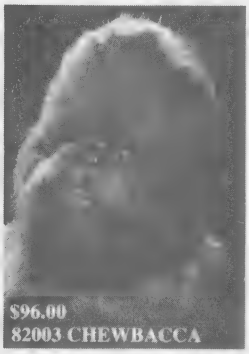

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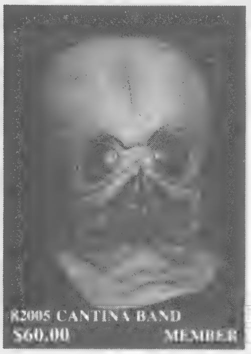

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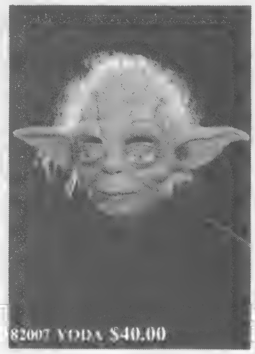

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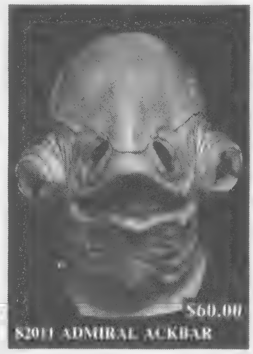

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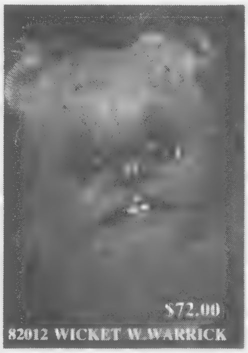

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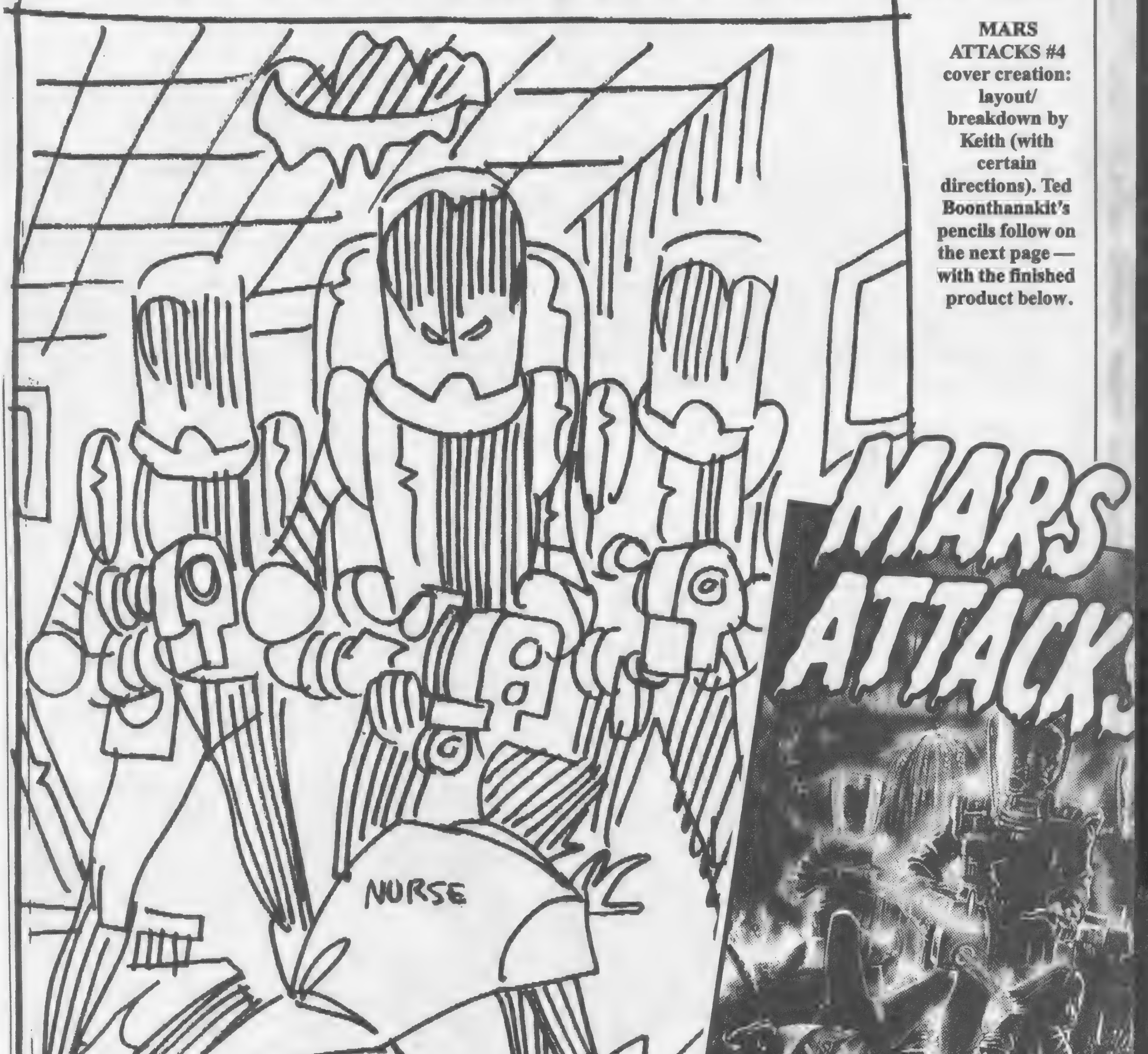
“Kurt Busiek is capturing the awe Kirby created.”

two points of view, one from the view of the Martians as well as the humans. It is a five-part comic book that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. I'm doing the MARS ATTACKS book the way I want to with a definite end in mind. When I'm done with it I walk away knowing my involvement is finished and I've told a complete story. Maybe if the project is successful enough somewhere down the road I'd feel like taking another crack at it. By telling a complete story I hope that no one is going to feel obligated later on to use the story as a point of reference. Next time I might say to Dwight, “What if the Martians attacked during World War II and all of Earth's forces united against them?” I don't think MARS ATTACKS has to be bound by any particular ground rules other than, “Here come the Martians and they're invading



MARS ATTACKS #4 cover creation: layout/breakdown by Keith (with certain directions). Ted Boonthanakit's pencils follow on the next page — with the finished product below.

"I'd also like to mention that readers should be on the lookout

Earth." That's it, period!

CHARLES: *That pretty much sums up the events in the main story. The backups explain the events that led up to the first invasion in 1962.*

KEITH: And people can apply those stories to the card set and to the new stories — if they want to. The backup stories could be independent of the new stories.

CHARLES: *The book is going to be a flip-book so readers are going to have covers each issue that will be reminiscent of the original cards.*

KEITH: And the back-up stories perfectly complement the original card set.

CHARLES: *For a very good reason, since the backups are written by none other than Len Brown, co-creator of the original card series.*

KEITH: Yep, Len's back in the saddle again. I've always wanted to ask Len if he ever thought that the cards would be back bigger and better 30 years later. It's safe to say that MARS ATTACKS will haunt him forever. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *As far as covers are concerned you're doing the first two covers for the first two issues.*

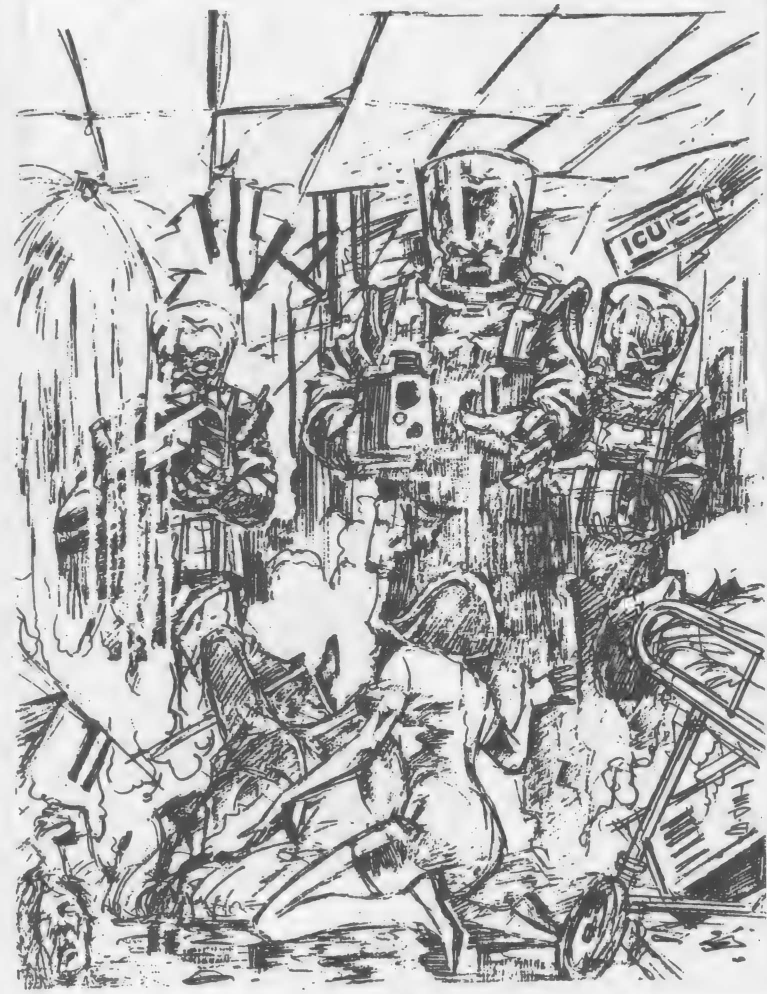
KEITH: And **Earl Norem** is doing the covers for the flip side. Earl, of course, is a wonderful artist who did a number of MARS ATTACKS cards.

CHARLES: *And we also have a wonderfully grotesque cover with a Topps twist done by Zina Saunders. Zine is, of course, the daughter of Norm Saunders, the artist that painted the original MARS ATTACKS cards.*

KEITH: Not to mention a cover by **Ted Boonthanakit** and **Ken Steacy.**

CHARLES: *To complete the package we have coloring by Digital Chameleon.*

KEITH: And they're the masters of coloring. **George** (the King of Canadian Comics) **Freeman** and his crew do a fabulous job. And I should add that George hates being called that — so that's why I mentioned it. I know we have a damn great product and a great team on the book so let's hope people buy it.



CHARLES: *I should also mention that the first issue also has a pull-out center spread that is a photo-journal of all 55 original MARS ATTACKS cards. I saw the final layout for the poster the other day and it looks fabulous.*

KEITH: I'm looking forward to that. I know there's an audience out there for it. Comics fans and card collectors should both be interested in the book. I've done the best story I can possibly do and everyone else has done their job. We have a great book with a great story and fabulous artwork. What we don't have is cover gimmicks to jack up the price of the book, or pin-up pages with no story — if you don't want to read the story, don't buy the book. If you want a neat read with great artwork, then this book is for you. There's nothing better than an old here-comes-the-invaders-from-space story!

I'd also like to mention that readers should be on the lookout for MARS ATTACKS GILLIGAN'S ISLAND. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *I wish you wouldn't have said that because now readers are going to believe you.*

KEITH: You're probably right. I've noticed that sarcasm doesn't always translate well in print. It's just a joke, folks.

CHARLES: *On the other hand, it doesn't sound that crazy and it might just sell.* (Laughter.) *Before we go on to your work on VICTORY for Topps, we should also mention that the original MARS ATTACKS cards are being reprinted and that an entire set of new cards is in the works.*

KEITH: Definitely, and if you liked what Topps did with the STAR WARS GALAXY set, then you'll love the new MARS ATTACKS cards, which feature new work from a variety of hot artists in the industry.

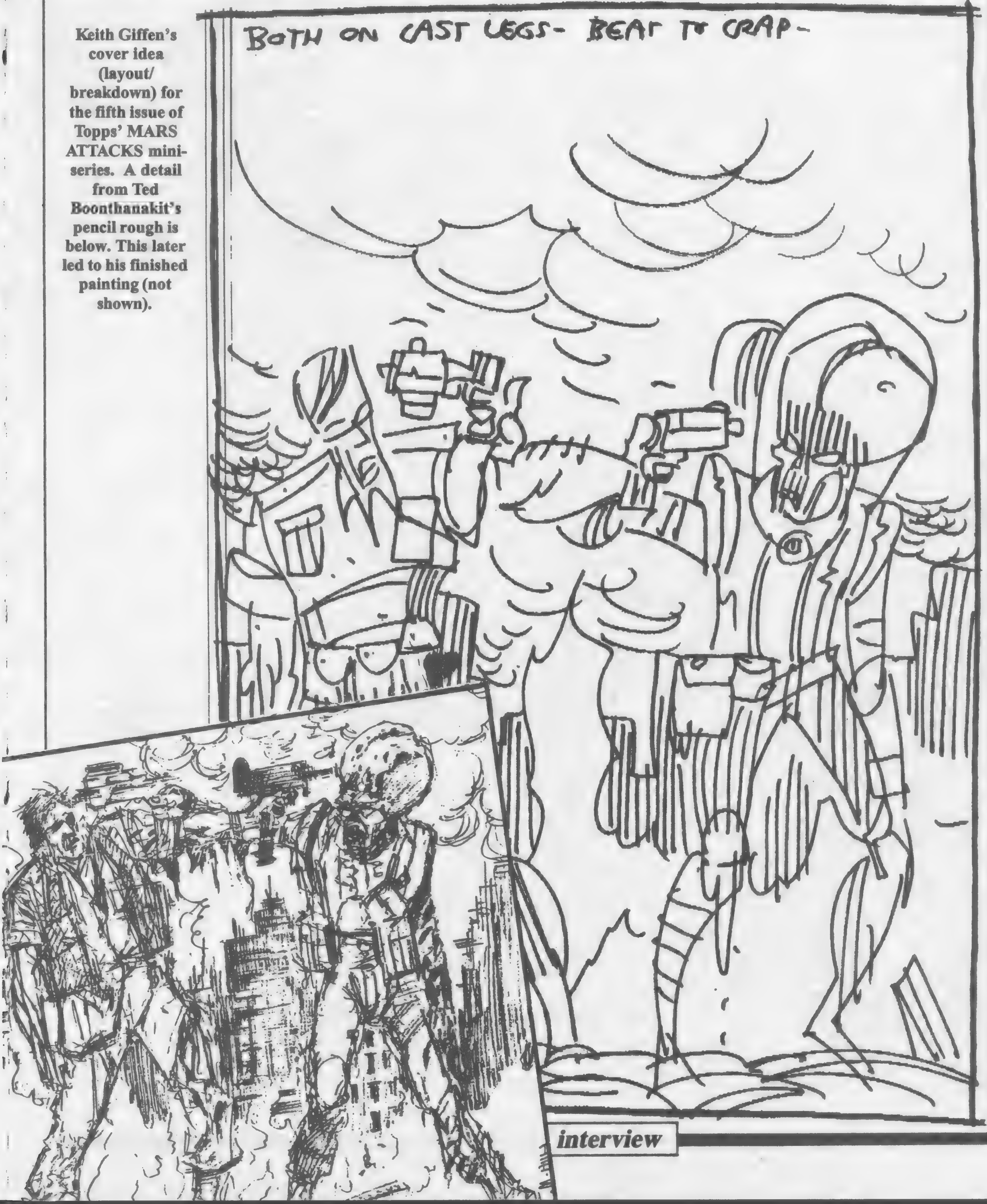
CHARLES: *Another project you're involved with is the new Kirbyverse titles for Topps.*

KEITH: Yes, VICTORY, a five-part series relaunching the **Kirby** universe for Topps. When Dwight called and approached me about it he mentioned that THE NINTH MEN would be a book spinning off of VICTORY and he told me the premise. I was familiar with Bombast, Nightglider and Captain Glory from the previous Topps books. I, of course, adore all of the **Kirby** stuff. I was so upset by Jack's death that I couldn't work for almost a week. When Dwight asked if I

for MARS ATTACKS GILLIGAN'S ISLAND. *(Laughter.)*”

was interested in doing one of the **Kirby** books, well, of course I was. I did ask for, and received permission for, a slight tweaking of the characters as far as costumes and such. Not because I know better than **Kirby,** but just because the reality is what is out there. I was satisfied with what I had worked up so I thought it would be fun. I was really excited about the project. When Dwight told me that Topps would be bringing Captain Victory back into the fold I was even more interested. Then I asked who was writing the VICTORY series. When Dwight told me it was **Kurt Busiek,** it was like, “Okay, I can do that.” *(Laughter.)* Kurt's MARVELS book is arguably, in my opinion, the best comic-book series to come along since WATCHMEN. Kurt has really found his voice and I can now go along for the ride. I figure this is Kurt's next attempt at superheroes after MARVELS; you bet I was excited. When Kurt faxed me his plot outlines for the book it just hammered the nail on the head for me. Kurt is capturing the awe that **Kirby** created with his characters. Kurt is

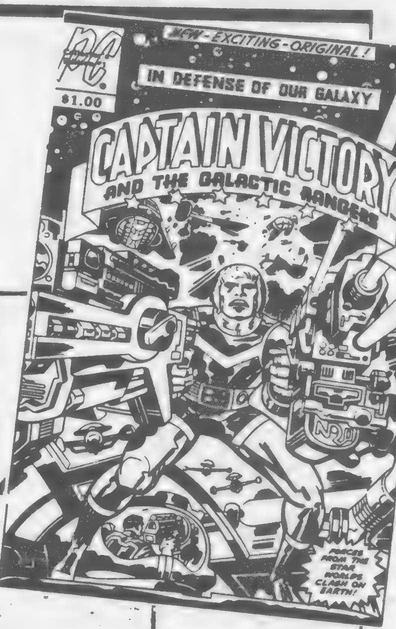
Keith Giffen's cover idea (layout/ breakdown) for the fifth issue of Topps' MARS ATTACKS mini-series. A detail from Ted Boonthanakit's pencil rough is below. This later led to his finished painting (not shown).


BOTH ON CAST LEGS- BEAT TO CRAP-

'Jack's legacy is in good hands. As the Kirbyverse books make

building heroes. These Kirby heroes are noble. There's not a suicidal character in the bunch. And they're not just throwbacks to the old characters; they're more like the next logical step in the evolution of superheroes. I couldn't be more thrilled with the project. I think it's more fun than a human being should have. These books are going to be exciting and fun and more than a little bit dangerous because of the twists written in by Kurt. I'm not trying to slavishly do **Jack Kirby** here, but I am trying to capture Jack's dynamics.

CHARLES: *It might be a good idea to describe the style you're applying to this book since one of the questions most asked about Keith Giffen when he starts*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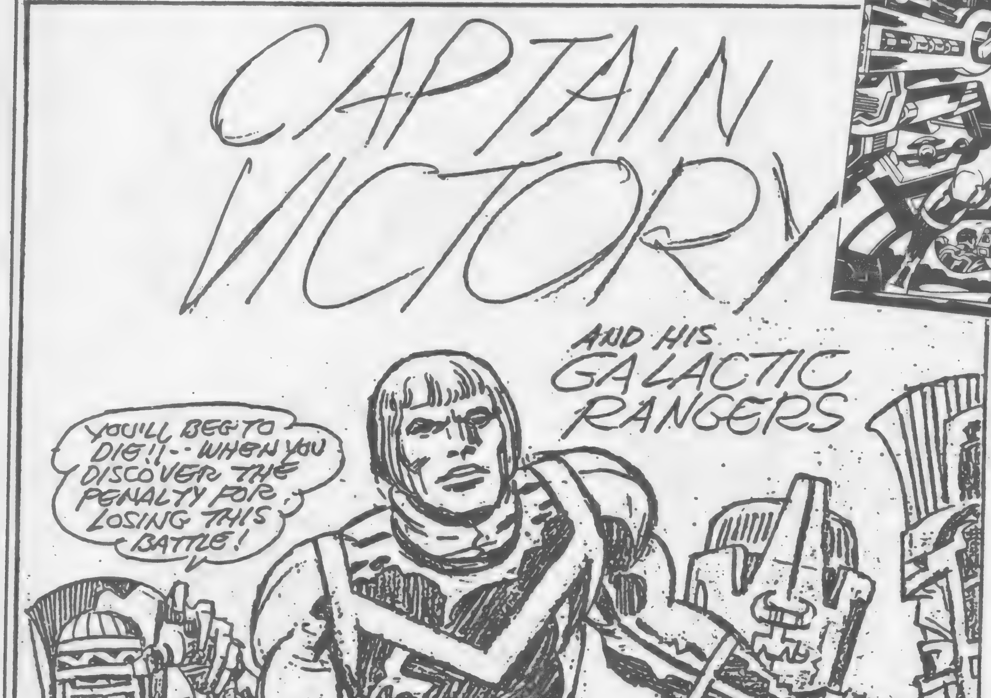

CAPTAIN VICTORY
AND HIS GALACTIC RANGERS
YOU'LL BEG TO DIE!! -- WHEN YOU DISCOVER THE PENALTY FOR LOSING THIS BATTLE!
Jack Kirby
A MAN RISKED MORE THAN HIS LIFE IN THE SPACE ARENAS OF

A rare opportunity to see one of the late Jack Kirby's self-rejected covers (in pencil form, no less). This was to have been the cover of his CAPTAIN VICTORY #1, published by Pacific Comics in November of 1981. Next page: Six of the nine panels from a page of Giffen's VICTORY mini-series from Topps Comics. Jimmy Palmiotti provides the inks for the main stories. This series also marks Keith's return to his favorite nine-panel storytelling grid.

money for Topps, they make money for the Kirby estate."

a new project is, "what style is he drawing it in?"

KEITH: When I left the LEGION I was working in the nine-panel grid that I really love. I still think the nine-panel grid is great for storytelling. Let's see, how would I describe what style I'm using? I think it rings truer to the LEGION stuff as opposed to the TRENCHER stuff. When I pencil things I tend to put in the blacks and do a lot of bleeds. With TRENCHER I'm pretty much inking right on the page without actually doing the pencils. When I do pencil work for another inker I use an entirely different approach.

CHARLES: *We should mention that joining the stellar team of Busiek and Giffen on VICTORY is Jimmy Palmiotti as inker.*

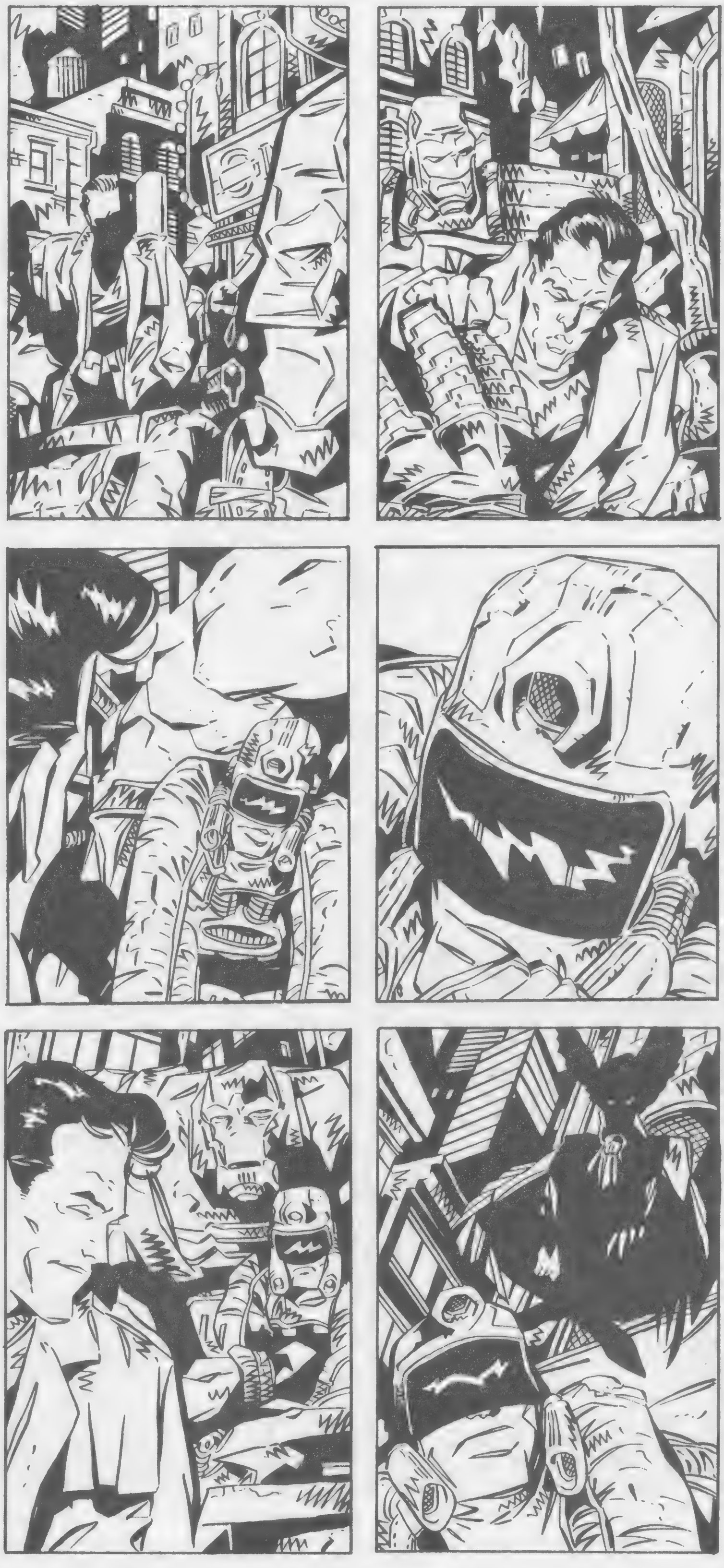
KEITH: That's right. When Dwight called and said they were looking around for an inker he mentioned **Jimmy Palmiotti.** Now I'm sure Jimmy is a great inker, but the only work of his I had ever seen was his inks over **Joe Quesada** on NINJAK. When Dwight sent me the first inked pages I couldn't believe it! Jimmy really nailed my work. The only other inker I ever saw nail my work on the first attempt was **Al Gordon,** who has always been my inker of choice. I was astonished by **Palmiotti's** inks. What I was giving him was some difficult work and I'm thrilled with the results. I know that I can throw whatever I want to at Jimmy and he'll handle it.

CHARLES: *It was great the way those things just clicked that way. It was either Dwight Zimmerman or Jim Salicrup that approached Palmiotti about doing the work and it just happened to be the same time that Jimmy left the NINJAK title.*

KEITH: It's funny the way these things have a way of working that way. VICTORY is going to be a great book. I want people to pick this book up because it's going to be a great title. The end result with VICTORY is that the sum of all of the collaborators is so much greater than any individual efforts would have been.

CHARLES: *We should mention to the fans the basic premise behind the VICTORY book.*

KEITH: I would like to mention before we do that all of these characters are owned and copyrighted by **Jack Kirby** or the **Jack Kirby** estate. This isn't like the we-screwed-**Jack-Kirby**-out-of-the-Hulk affair. **Roz Kirby** can be proud that Jack's legacy is being left in good hands. As the Kirbyverse books make money for Topps, so too does it make money for the estate of **Jack Kirby**.When it comes to



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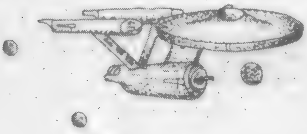

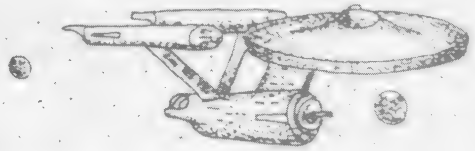

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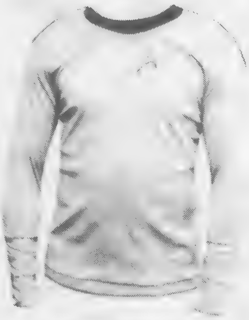

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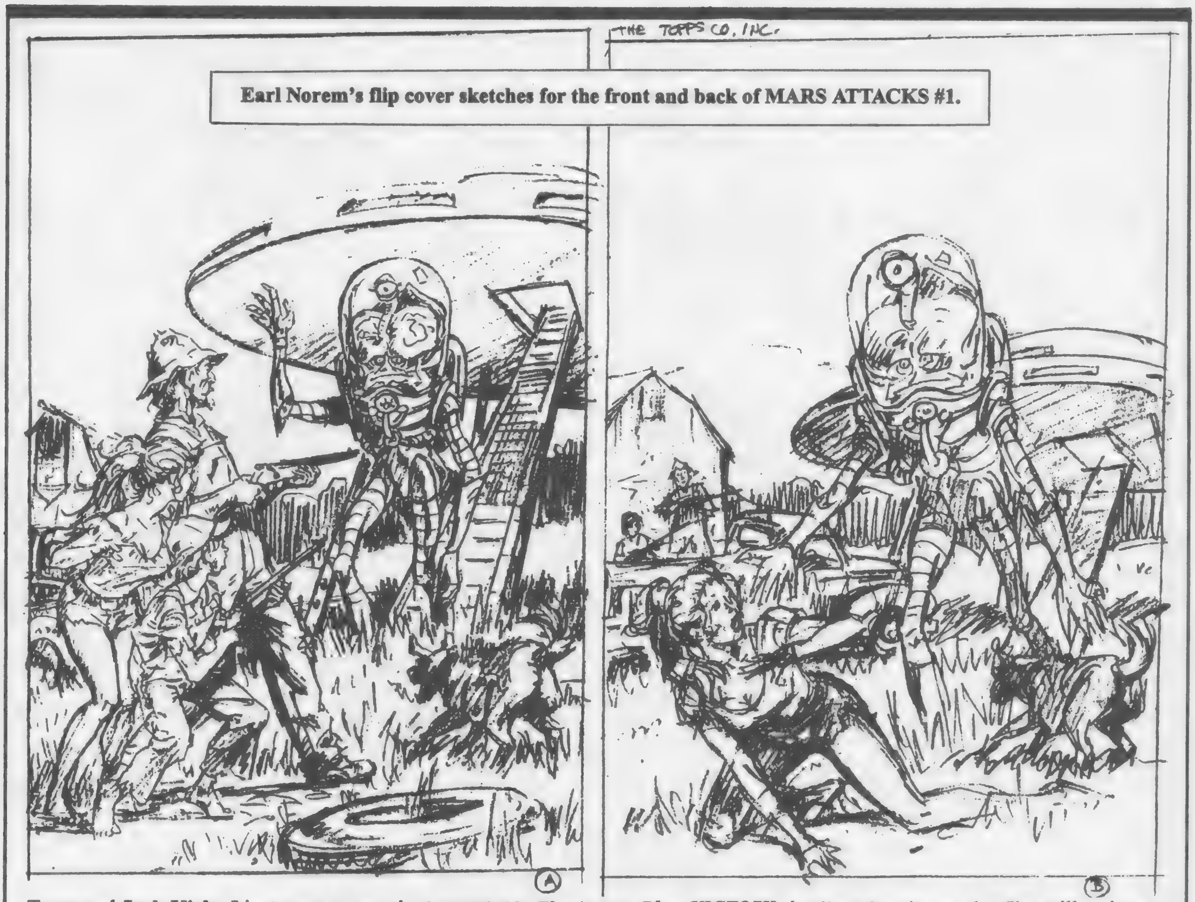
"Topps will launch VICTORY, SILVER STAR & NINTH MEN."



Earl Norem's flip cover sketches for the front and back of MARS ATTACKS #1.

Topps and **Jack Kirby** I just want to say that Topps just did it right. I'm sure Kurt and Jimmy would agree that anything we can bring to the book, as much of ourselves that we can put into the book, is all for Jack. In a way I look at it this way — it's just a payback. Anyone in comics today who's asked who influenced them and doesn't mention **Jack Kirby's** name is either lying or stupid. Period — over and out. And if anyone wants to take me to task with that I'd be more than happy to take the matter up with them. No one can say, "This is the way **Kirby** would have done the book." Ridiculous. Only **Kirby** could have done it that way. The best I can do is to cleave as close to the **Kirby** cut on this book as possible. The proof that we're doing it exactly right is that the **Kirby** stuff is so much fun to do. We're not trying to deliver any social messages, we're just out to tell a great action-packed story.

CHARLES: *The premise behind VICTORY is that it will serve as a lead-in to a series of new Kirbyverse titles.*

KEITH: As I understand it, Topps will be launching CAPTAIN VICTORY, SILVER STAR and THE NINTH MEN later in 1994.

CHARLES: *That's true. Plus, VICTORY will actually have every major character that has appeared to date in the Kirbyverse for Topps. Not to mention a plethora of villains. The gang from SATAN'S SIX and the TEENAGENTS as well as Nightglider, Bombast, Captain Victory, and all of the Ninth Men appear in the series.*

KEITH: Wait a minute, I just remembered that we'll be introducing a new character.

CHARLES: *But I don't think we're allowed to let the cat out of the bag yet.*

KEITH: The hell with that — we'll be introducing Tiger 21! That's all I'm going to say about that. I'll leave it for readers to figure out who Tiger 21 really is. If they've been following the Topps **Kirby** material there are a few clues as to the identity of Tiger 21.

CHARLES: *One of the main villains in VICTORY is Lightning Lady.*

KEITH: And she looks great. I sort of **Kirby**-fied her and gave her an Odin-like dress. The character reeks of the **Kirby** style of design.

CHARLES: *Is there a favorite character developing yet?*

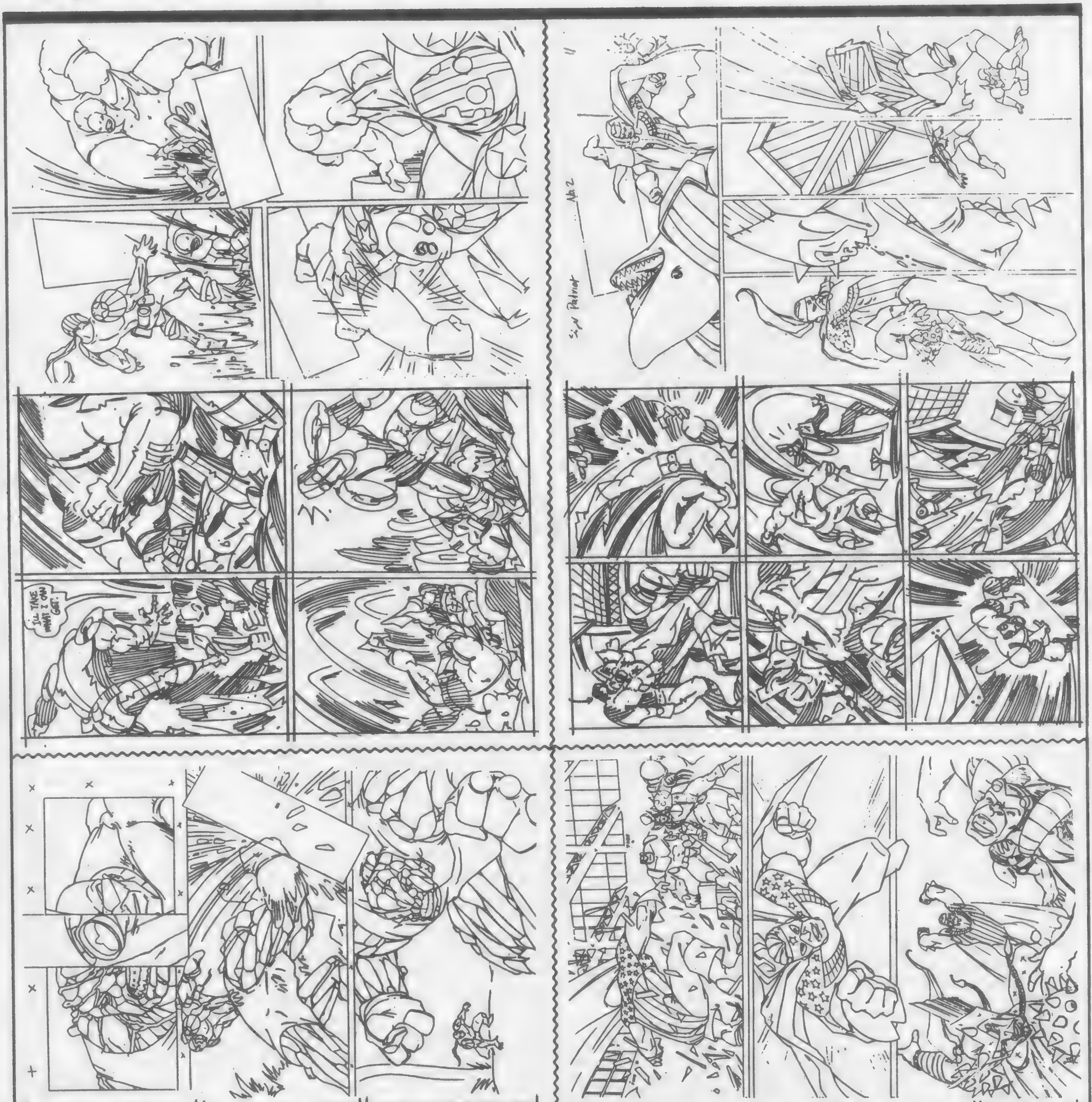
KEITH: I'm really getting into Bombast. Silver Star is one that I'm still trying to really get down. This book is really exciting because we do have so many characters. The book is action-packed like you wouldn't believe. In essence Captain Victory is re-introduced and that spells trouble for the heroes of Earth. With Kurt writing it you know it'll be entertaining as well as exciting. I'd also like to mention that both Trencher and Savage Dragon will be showing up in THE NINTH MEN series which follows the wrap-up of the VICTORY books. When we say that we're giving people a reason to pick up these titles we're really putting our money where our mouths are.

Topps has shown a real willingness to let the creator flex his muscles. The worst that will happen with that scenario is Dwight or Jim will call and say something like "Are you sure you know where you're going with this?"

CHARLES: *I think that appears to be a Jim Salicrup trait.*

KEITH: That's probably true. This is my first time working with **Salicrup** and I'd say that is true. You never hear anyone say anything bad about Jim. The rare time or two that you do hear something negative about Jim you find out that it came

“Anyone reading MARVELS is going to want to pick up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BAH! YOU AMERICANS! ALL TALK & OVER-BLOWN REPUTATION!
TOO BAD. I HOPED FOR A CHALLENGE... NOT A CHASE!

Four pages from Erik Larsen’s SUPERPATRIOT #2 (layouts by Giffen and pencils by Dave Johnson). Note the retention of Keith’s dynamics by Dave (regardless of his deviations).

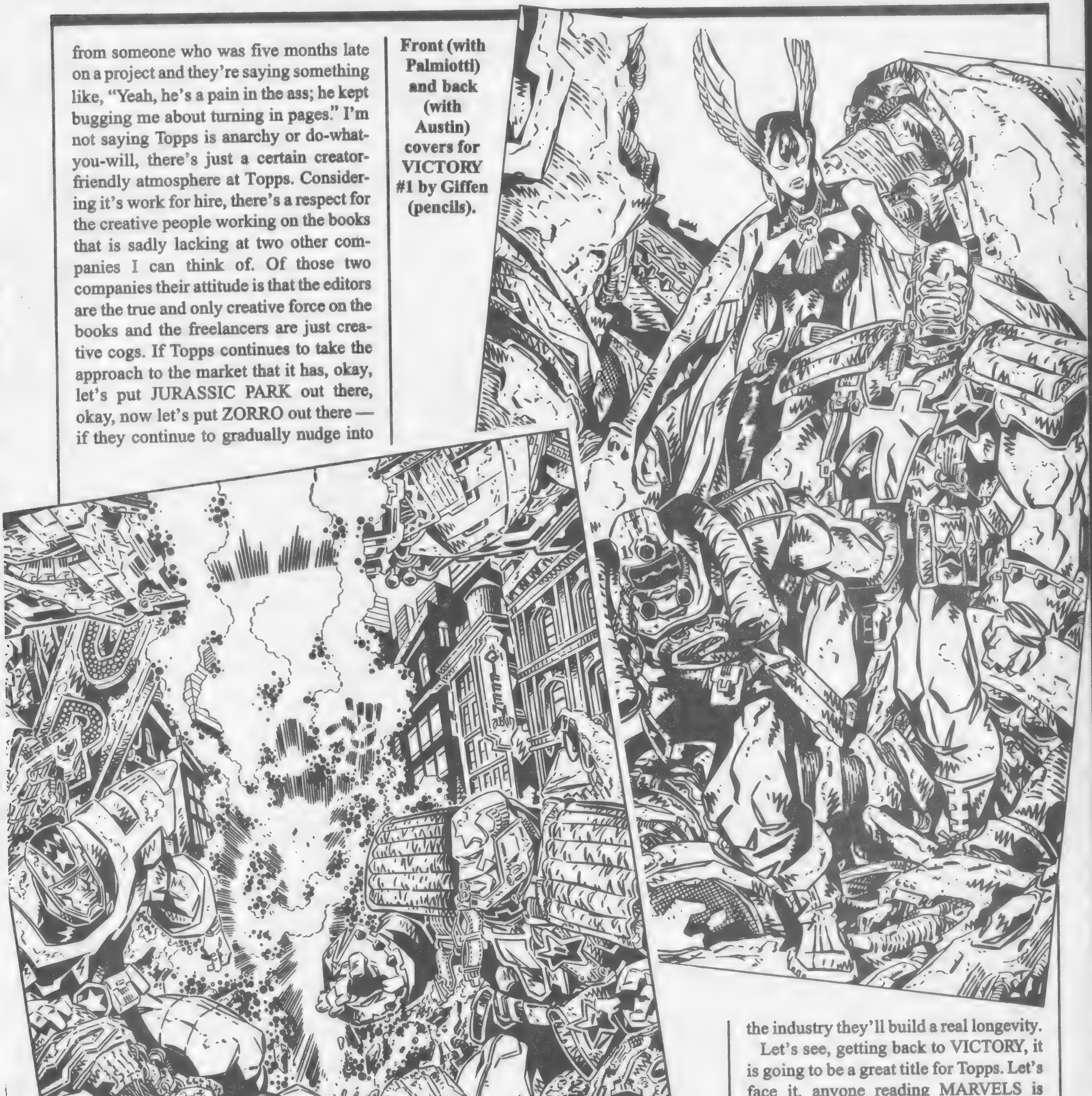
VICTORY to see what Kurt Busiek is working on next."

from someone who was five months late on a project and they're saying something like, "Yeah, he's a pain in the ass; he kept bugging me about turning in pages." I'm not saying Topps is anarchy or do-what-you-will, there's just a certain creator-friendly atmosphere at Topps. Considering it's work for hire, there's a respect for the creative people working on the books that is sadly lacking at two other companies I can think of. Of those two companies their attitude is that the editors are the true and only creative force on the books and the freelancers are just creative cogs. If Topps continues to take the approach to the market that it has, okay, let's put JURASSIC PARK out there, okay, now let's put ZORRO out there — if they continue to gradually nudge into the industry they'll build a real longevity.

Let's see, getting back to VICTORY, it is going to be a great title for Topps. Let's face it, anyone reading MARVELS is going to want to pick up VICTORY just to see what Kurt is working on next.

CHARLES: *And there's a bit of poetic justice that Kurt is working on MARVELS, which is highlighting characters created or co-created by Jack Kirby while carrying on the Kirby mythos by writing VICTORY and SILVER STAR for Topps.*

KEITH: I hope everyone will pick up both MARS ATTACKS and VICTORY because they are exciting titles. I know I'm having a blast working on the titles.



Front (with Palmiotti) and back (with Austin) covers for VICTORY #1 by Giffen (pencils).

"I was dating a girl at Marvel Comics and she introduced

RICK PARKER

Multi-talented Rick Parker applies his drawing and lettering skills to Marvel's top selling BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD comic book. Created by Mike Judge, Beavis and Butt-Head are currently appearing on MTV — it was just a matter of time before Beavis and Butt-head invaded the world of comics! Interviewer Charles Novinskie stopped by Parker's Manhattan studio to discuss Rick's involvement with the comics and the events that led to his assignment on the series . . .

CHARLES S. NOVINSKIE: *You're now working on the extremely popular BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD comic book. Why don't you fill readers in on your background in comics leading up to your involvement with the comic?*

RICK PARKER: I started out as an artist, but apparently comics companies weren't interested in an artist with my abilities at the time. Apparently, someone was leaving a staff position at Marvel and I was just happy to get a job doing whatever I could. I was interested in working at Marvel, so **Danny Cresspi** encouraged me to practice my lettering so that I could work in the corrections department. I worked at Marvel doing lettering corrections and such for quite a few years. I started in 1977.

CHARLES: *How does one go about getting a job at Marvel Comics?*

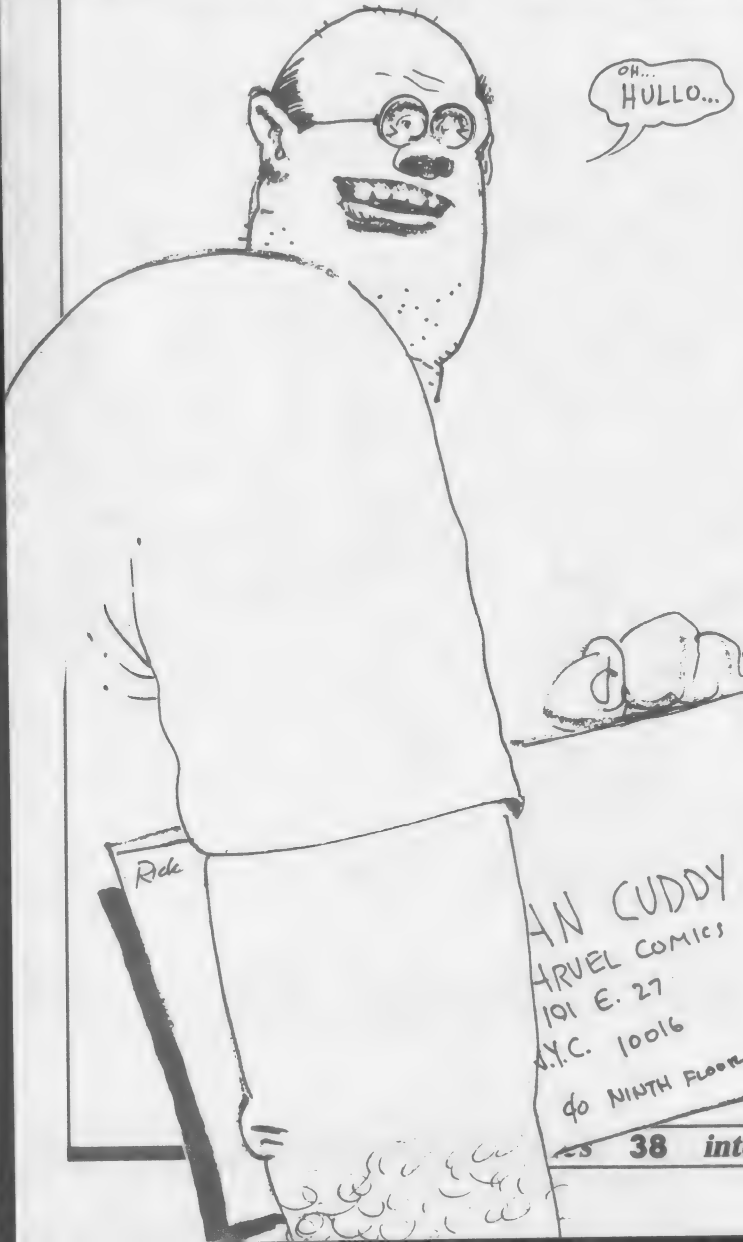
RICK: Well, that varies, I'm sure. In my case, and this was about 20 years ago, I was dating a girl at Marvel Comics and she took me up to the office one day and introduced me around. I thought that it would be a fun place to work. She introduced me to people like **John Verpoorten, Marie Severin, George Roussos,** and **Danny Cresspi.** I think **Archie Goodwin** was there as editor in chief. I figured that if I ever had to get a staff job to support myself Marvel would be a fun place to work. At the time I was sure I was going to get an art gallery to represent my work because I was primarily interested in fine arts. At the time I had no plan to work in commercial arts to support myself.

CHARLES: *It was Jim Salicrup that mentioned to me that you did a lot of art on envelopes and things like that.*

RICK: What I used to do when I would be waiting for messengers to arrive at the art studio to pick up artwork was draw cartoons all over the envelopes along with the names of the people that were receiving the packages. I would draw funny caricatures of the messengers delivering the packages on the envelopes. A lot of these packages were for delivery to the Marvel offices. One day when I was up at the Marvel offices I noticed that a lot of the editors were saving the envelopes with my artwork on them rather than throwing them away. The art was on bulletin boards or on sides of filing cabinets.

CHARLES: *I know Jim Salicrup has a really huge selection of your envelope drawings.*

RICK: Well, Jim saved a lot of that stuff. I eventually left my staff position at Marvel in 1983, but I still made a lot of trips to the offices and did a lot of my work for Marvel at the office in the bullpen. It was about that time when MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE was just starting up and Jim was editing it. I did a



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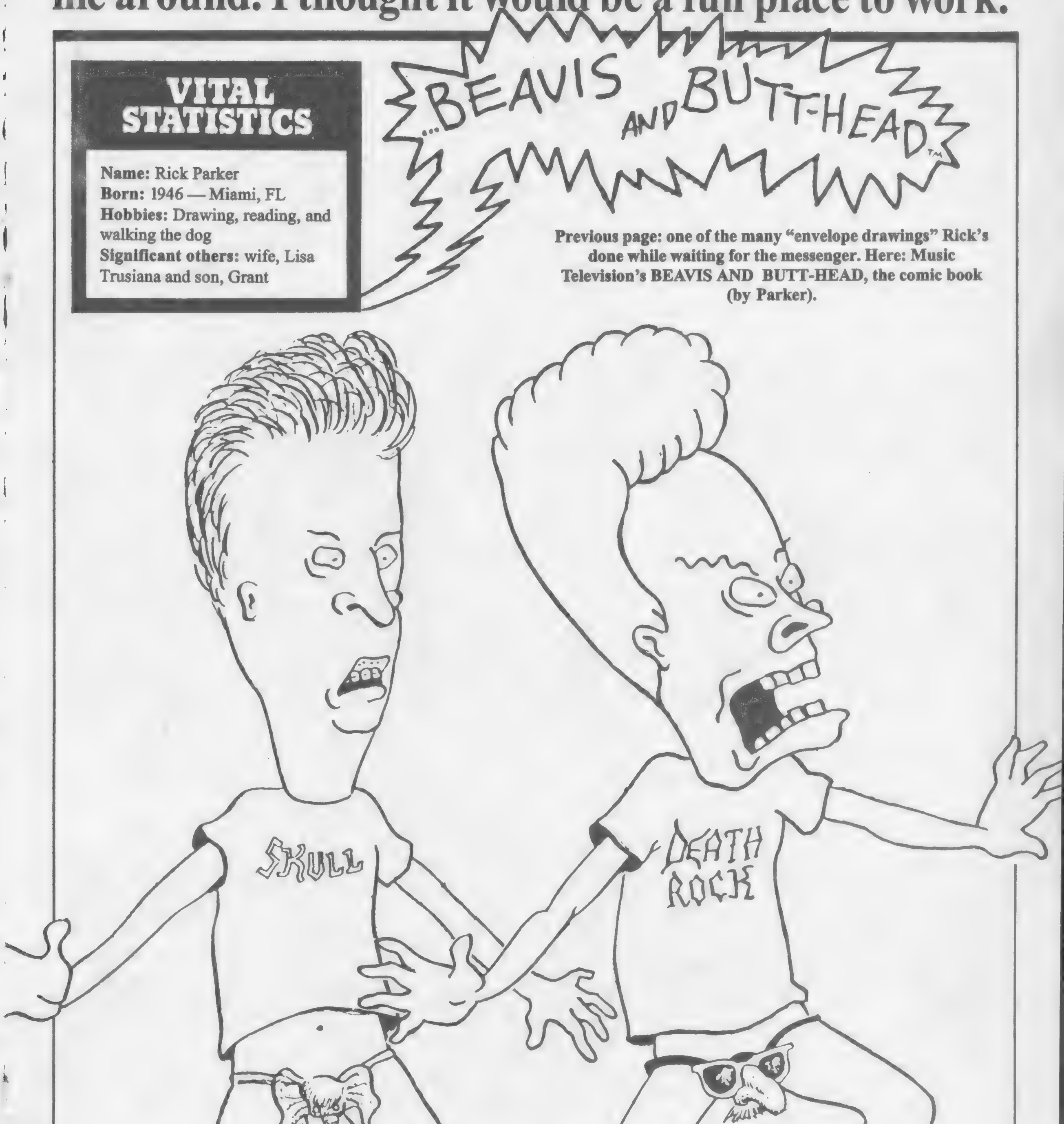
me around. I thought it would be a fun place to work.”

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Rick Parker
Born: 1946 — Miami, FL
Hobbies: Drawing, reading, and walking the dog
Significant others: wife, Lisa Trusiana and son, Grant



Previous page: one of the many “envelope drawings” Rick’s done while waiting for the messenger. Here: Music Television’s BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD, the comic book (by Parker).

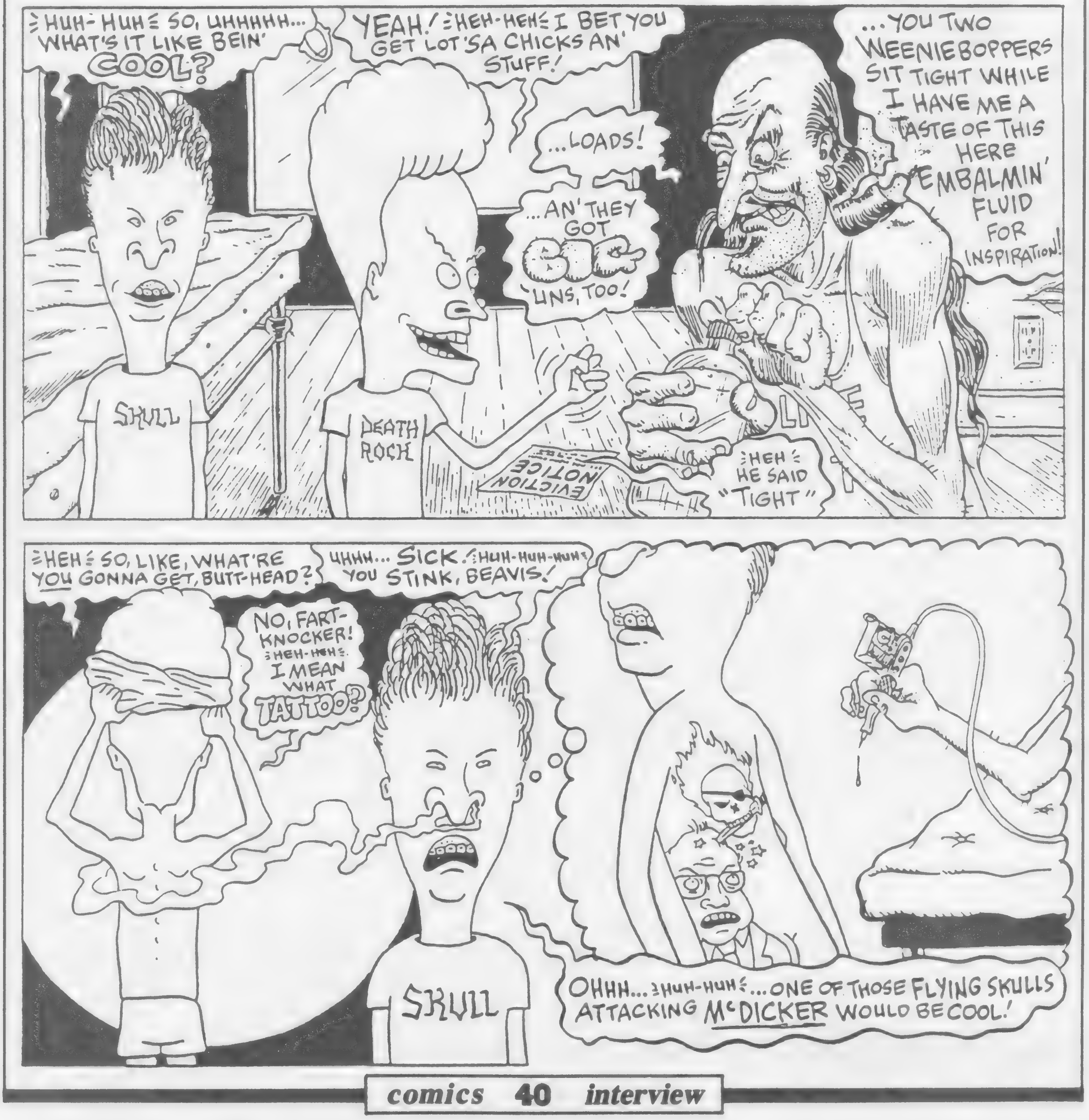
"MTV looks at the artwork to make sure all of the characters

lot of illustrations for MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE. In 1989 I did a Messenger calendar that included a lot of the characters I had been drawing on the envelopes. It was actually **Jim Salicrup** that called me up and encouraged me to do the calendar. Jim reminded me of my character, Stickman, that I did a strip for back in 1983. The character didn't speak and didn't have a face. If there's anyone out there interested in doing comics for a living I'd like to offer one bit of advice. Don't do a character that doesn't have a face and can't speak. *(Laughter.)* Somehow it's just very limiting.

I used to keep copies of the strip around the office and even did a Stickman calendar in 1983 for people around the office. In 1989 Jim convinced me to do the New York City Messenger Calendar. As horrible and disgusting looking as the characters were in my calendar I was shocked to see that there are even more disgusting looking people actually walking the streets of Manhattan. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *I see a trend here that you have a very wonderful cartoon style that lends itself well to a series like Beavis and Butt-head and that you were doing a lot of self promotion of your artwork in very creative ways.*

RICK: That's exactly right. More and more people were seeing and enjoying my work. In fact, when **Steve Saffel** became editor of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE he asked me to do a regular feature. I did a cartoon strip based on people that worked at Marvel and that was THE BOSSMEN. That strip ran about a year and a half. It was a great strip that I had a lot of fun with. Shortly thereafter **Mark Gruenwald** contacted me about doing a strip for the editorial page of Marvel Comics. He asked **Barry Dutter** to come up with ideas for the cartoon and I illustrated it. The cartoon ran in, like, every Marvel comic every week which meant that my art was being seen in something like six million comics every week. Eventually, I thought it would be fun to write the gag strip myself and Barry was only too happy to be released from his obligation of having to think up funny gags week


HUH-HUH SO, UHHHHH... WHAT'S IT LIKE BEIN' COOL?
YEAH! HEH-HEH I BET YOU GET LOT'SA CHICKS AN' STUFF!
...LOADS!
...AN' THEY GOT BIG 'UNS, TOO!
...YOU TWO WEENIEBOPPERS SIT TIGHT WHILE I HAVE ME A TASTE OF THIS HERE EMBALMIN' FLUID FOR INSPIRATION!
SKULL
DEATH ROCK
EVICTION NOTICE
HEH HE SAID "TIGHT"
HEH SO, LIKE, WHAT'RE YOU GONNA GET, BUTT-HEAD?
UHHH... SICK! HUH-HUH-HUH YOU STINK, BEAVIS!
NO, FART-KNOCKER! HEH-HEH I MEAN WHAT TATTOO?
SKULL
OHHH... HUH-HUH ...ONE OF THOSE FLYING SKULLS ATTACKING McDICKER WOULD BE COOL!

look as close to the way they're supposed to as possible."

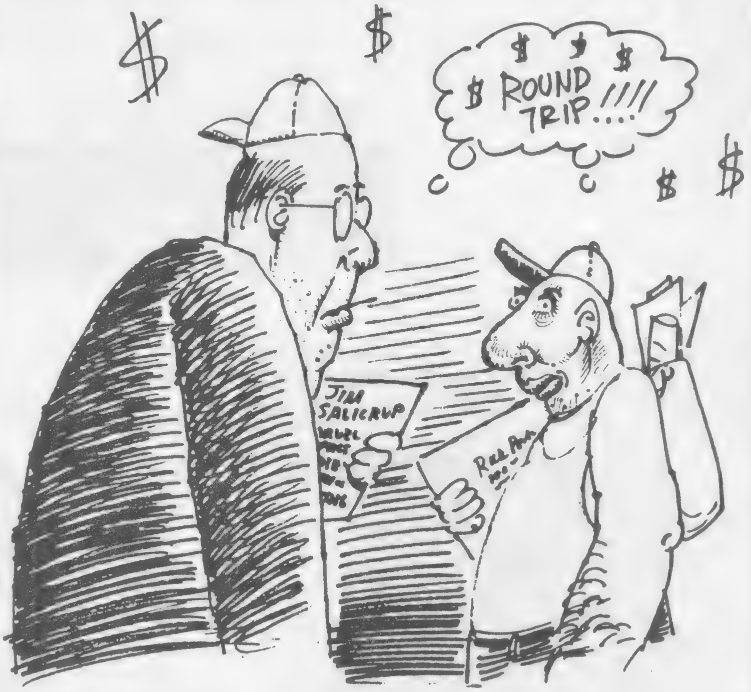
after week. Barry continued to write the editorial page and I did the cartoon. **Glenn Herdling,** who had worked with **Jim Salicrup** as assistant editor on SPIDER-MAN, had seen my envelope drawings and cartoons and asked me to do a big poster of his 1989 summer vacation. There were, like, several hundred people in the drawing and it was a great piece. Anyway, when Glenn became editor at Marvel he asked me to fill in on a DESTROYER story. The story involved the Destroyer coming to the Marvel offices and demanding changes in his stories. That was one of the first major comic stories that I was involved with besides doing covers and things like that. It was **Glenn Herdling** who said to me that if anything came along that would be well suited to my work that he would want me on the project. It was, like, July of 1993 when Glenn mentioned to me that we might be getting BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD as a property. I had seen a few episodes at that time and I thought it was extremely funny so I was excited about the prospect of doing the book.

CHARLES: *When did you actually start working on the title?*

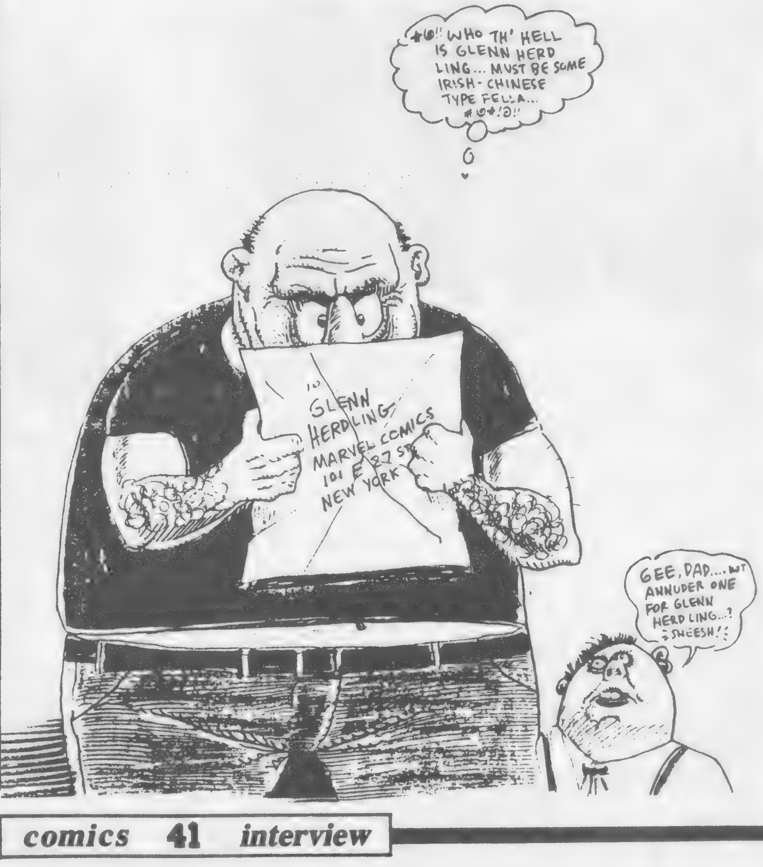
RICK: It was September of 1993. We worked on the first issue for about six weeks. It actually took about six weeks to do the second issue, also, so we began to wonder how we were going to do the book on a monthly basis. *(Laughter.)* Now we actually have the process down to three weeks. At least the artwork part of it. I don't know how long it is taking **Mike Lackey** to write them.

CHARLES: *Is this book being done Marvel style, in which the pencils are done from plots and then scripted?*

RICK: No, this is a true collaboration. Mike comes up with the plots and then discusses it with the editorial consultant at MTV, **Glenn Eichler,** and **Glenn Herdling.** They plan out future issues and they have plans to have Beavis and Butt-head go everywhere from the circus to a wax museum. After they meet, Mike turns in some layouts or storyboards to me and I take the material and "do my thing" with it. The pencil artwork, along with the dialogue lettered in, goes back to the Marvel editorial department and to MTV. **Diane Sparagano** of the MTV art department looks at the artwork to make sure that Beavis and Butt-head and all of the MTV characters look as close to the way they're supposed to look as possible. It is important to everyone concerned that the characters we do in the comic look like the characters in the television show. MTV has been wonderful in supplying us



More of Parker's envelope drawings — these two sent to Jim Salicrup, who was then Marvel's "Spidey" editor, and Glenn Herdling.


#@!! WHO TH' HELL IS GLENN HERD LING... MUST BE SOME IRISH-CHINESE TYPE FELLA... #@*!@!!
TO GLENN HERDLING MARVEL COMICS 101 E 27 ST NEW YORK
GEE, DAD.... NOT ANNUDER ONE FOR GLENN HERD LING...? ¡SHEESH!¡

AS SEEN ON MTV'S BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD

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"No matter how stupid, you feel superior to Beavis & Butt-head."

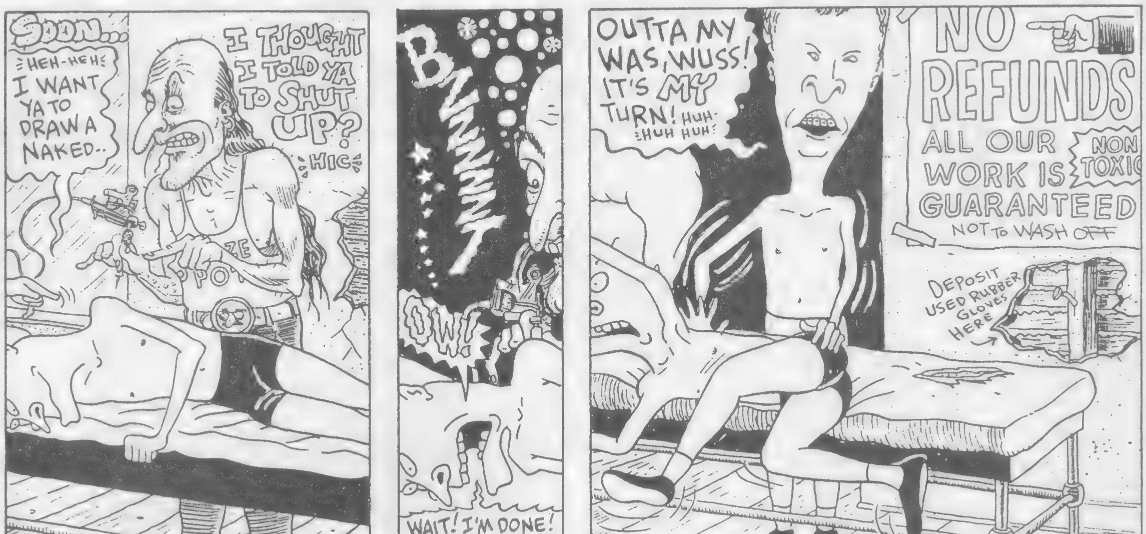
with all of the reference we need. Some of the times they think of things that are even funnier than what we had so we'll make those changes. My job is to tell the story of Beavis and Butt-head and to include as much visual material as possible so that a person can read this comic twice. They can read it the first time for the Beavis and Butt-head story and then go back and reread it looking for the material added in the art details in the backgrounds and such. I think that is a formula that worked very well at MAD magazine for **Harvey Kurtzman** and **Will Elder.** Nothing wrong with that, I say!

CHARLES: *The comic actually hit the stands in January and the sales on it were phenomenal.*

RICK: Just say it was the best selling comic book of 1994 to date. That's what I believe anyway. We hope it will sell even better once people get over the disgust of the entire thing. I think some people have a prejudice for this type of material. I hope that we can take people whose minds are made up against this book, and they'll give it a try and end up enjoying it. We want these people to pick up this book because we think it's fun and we want people to have fun. We believe people like to feel good and to laugh and I feel the book is designed to tickle their ribs. I would also like to mention **Rob Camacho**, who is assisting me on the book. Rob is actually the "head man" here at Beavis and Butt-head Central since he actually does many of the heads in the book. Rob is also hard at work on coloring upcoming issues. I'd also like to mention **Mike Judge** because he's the real genius in coming up with the characters Beavis and Butt-head. I think the key to their success is that no matter how stupid you are you can always feel superior to Beavis and Butt-head. I myself often feel stupid and dumb and I'm relieved to know that there are actually cartoon characters worse off than me.

I should also add that Rob and I both feel that deep down Beavis and Butt-head are truly responsible for all of the wrongs in the world today. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *Beavis and Butt-head of course review rock videos on MTV, so it*


SOON...
HEH-HEH I WANT YA TO DRAW A NAKED..
I THOUGHT I TOLD YA TO SHUT UP?
HIC
BZZZZZZZ
OW!
WAIT! I'M DONE! I'M DONE!
OUTTA MY WAS, WUSS! IT'S MY TURN! HUH-HUH HUH
NO REFUNDS
ALL OUR WORK IS GUARANTEED NOT TO WASH OFF
NON TOXIC
DEPOSIT USED RUBBER GLOVES HERE
...HOPE YOU LIKE SWISS CHEESE, PUNK HIC
HUH-HUH HOW DID YOU, LIKE, LOSE YOUR FINGERS?
CUT IT OUT! THAT'S ENOUGH!!
HEY-- WHAT'S WITH YOU TWO BUTT-SURFERS?
HOLD STILL AN' STOP SQUIRMIN'! I'VE GOT A TROOP OF GIRL SCOUTS WAITIN'!

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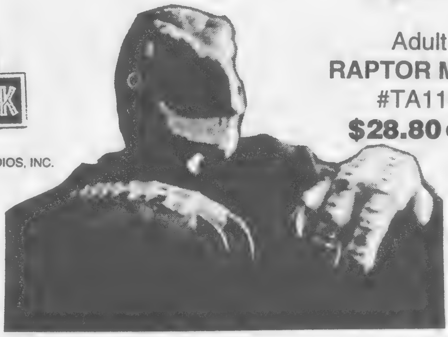

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"If anyone wants to send me money, send it care of Marvel."

only seemed natural that they would take a critical look at Marvel comics in the comic book. It worked really great and I was curious who first came up with the concept to review comic books.

RICK: Actually, I believe it was **Glenn Herdling** who first came up with the brilliant concept of criticizing Marvel Comics. It just seems to work, especially when it is us criticizing Marvel because we work at Marvel Comics. We think it's fun to point out things that they do that are worth laughing at. *(Laughter.)* We try to find something to ridicule in every stratum of society, not just the comics industry. Let's face it, Beavis and Butt-head aren't politically correct and this isn't a PC comic book.

CHARLES: *I laughed out loud when I read the activity page in the first issue of BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD. I kind of figured that when I was a teenager it was only me and my buddies that knew about the trick with the Indian maiden on the Land O'Lakes butter package.*

RICK: I thought that was great, too. The only problem I have is that in the twenty or so years since I did that it seems that the Indian maiden's breasts are now smaller than they were. *(Laughter.)* While we're on the subject of the Beavis and Butt-head activity page we just found out today that we did a page that was even too gross for Beavis and Butt-head and we won't be able to run it in issue #5. I think we'd like to read a bit of it for you to show you how genius **Mike Lackey** the writer really is. It was a special bonus page, "Flick Your Spit." *(Laughter.)* To begin with, we like to use the word "flick" in comics as much as possible because if you get that 'L' and the 'I' in the right position some over-zealous people might see a four-letter word that starts with "F" rather than the word "flick." *(Laughter.)* Not only does it show how to flick spit with your finger, but Beavis suggests that it's also a great way to flick boogers. *(Laughter.)* There's a great drawing no one will see of Beavis with his finger stuck up his left nostril and his thumb between his upper and lower teeth. *(Laughter.)* It also shows Beavis and Butt-head in a movie theater putting string in a jar of vaseline. The idea is to fake a sneeze and flick this vaseline-coated string on someone. Of course, we show Beavis flicking it onto the neck of Mr. Anderson. *(Laughter.)* It's a real shame because I guess someone is concerned that somebody will actually start flicking spit on people. And to me that's a shame because I would rather that than having people flicking their spit on sidewalks, which is where we see it all the time. I mean, that's really gross because it doesn't go away until it rains or something. *(Laughter.)*

CHARLES: *Unfortunately, that's one activity page no one is going to see. I'm sure that we'll see equally brilliant activity pages in the months to come?*

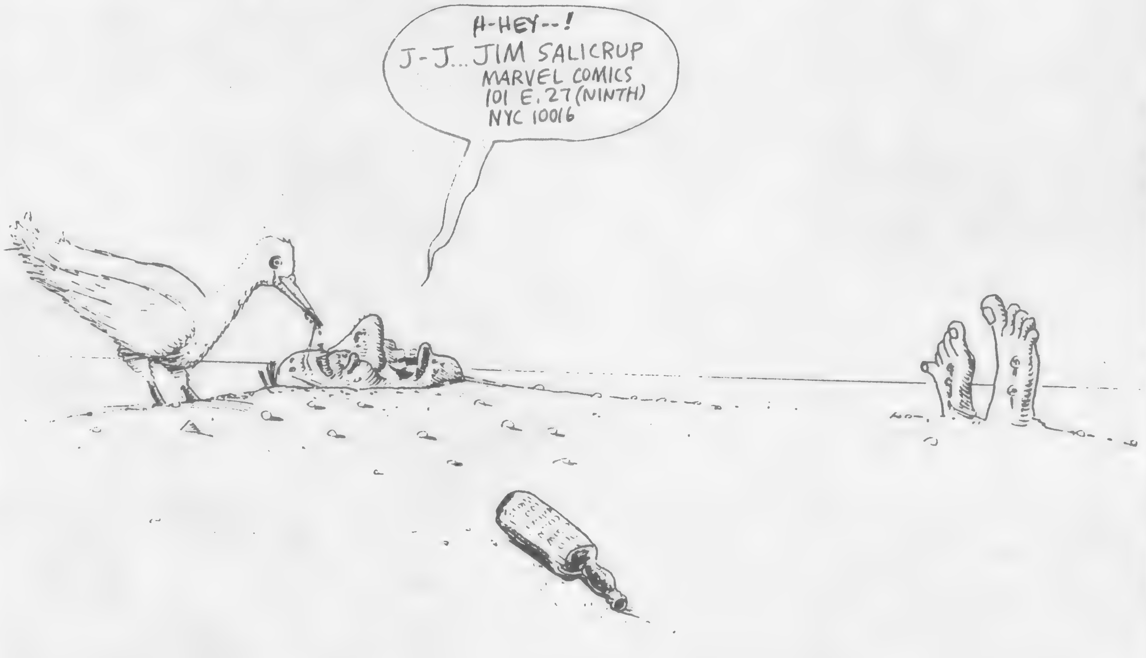
RICK: Oh, sure. By the time this interview sees print we'll have quite a few of them.

CHARLES: *Actually, this issue will be out really soon so all of this material is very timely. I think you're in the issue that also has an interview about Todd McFarlane so you'll be able to help him sell some copies of his book.* (Laughter.)

RICK: I'd just like to say that if Todd is reading this, Todd owes me lots of money. *(Laughter.)* And if anyone else wants to send me money they can send it to me care of Marvel.

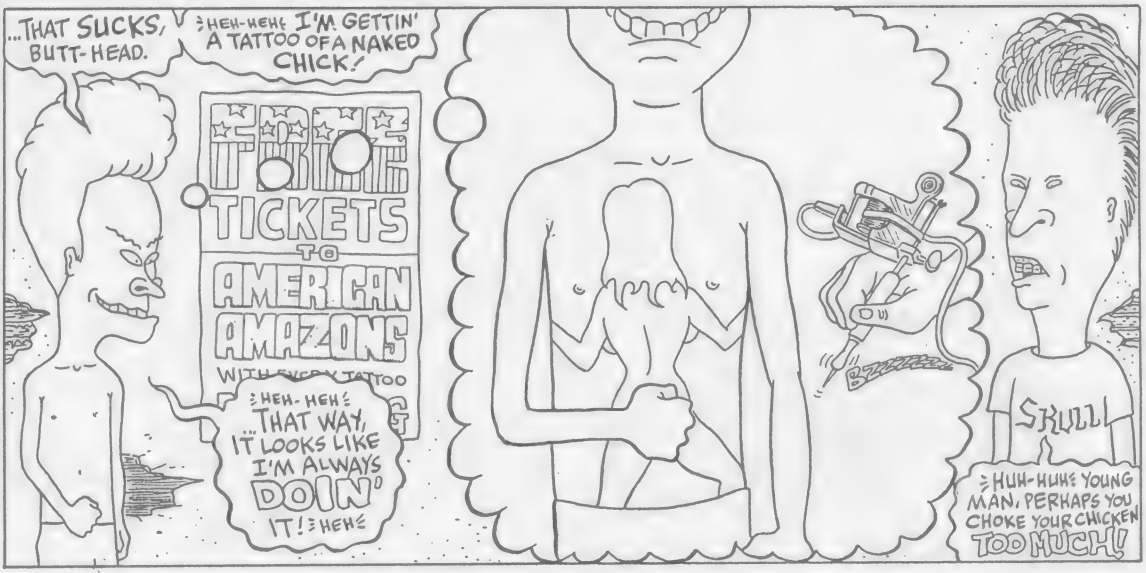
CHARLES: *Given the success of BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD and other humor books now being published, it appears that humor comics have weathered the comic-book implosion quite well.*

RICK: Thanks to the success of strips like CALVIN AND HOBBES, THE FAR SIDE, THE SIMPSONS and REN AND STIMPY we're real happy that humor books are making a comeback. I never thought that they went away. I mean, do people ever want to stop laughing? Humor is here to stay, that's what I say! Topps is a fine example with a lot of their products like WACKY PACKAGES and great art by the likes of **Wally Wood** and **Jack Davis.** God bless those guys, where would we be without their inspiration?



"BEACH BUM"

"Yams are a very dirty vegetable and they grow underground."


...THAT SUCKS, BUTT-HEAD.
HEH-HEH I'M GETTIN' A TATTOO OF A NAKED CHICK!
FREE TICKETS TO AMERICAN AMAZONS WITH EVERY TATTOO
HEH-HEH ...THAT WAY, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M ALWAYS DOIN' IT! HEH
BZZZZZZ
SKULL
HUH-HUH YOUNG MAN, PERHAPS YOU CHOKE YOUR CHICKEN TOO MUCH!

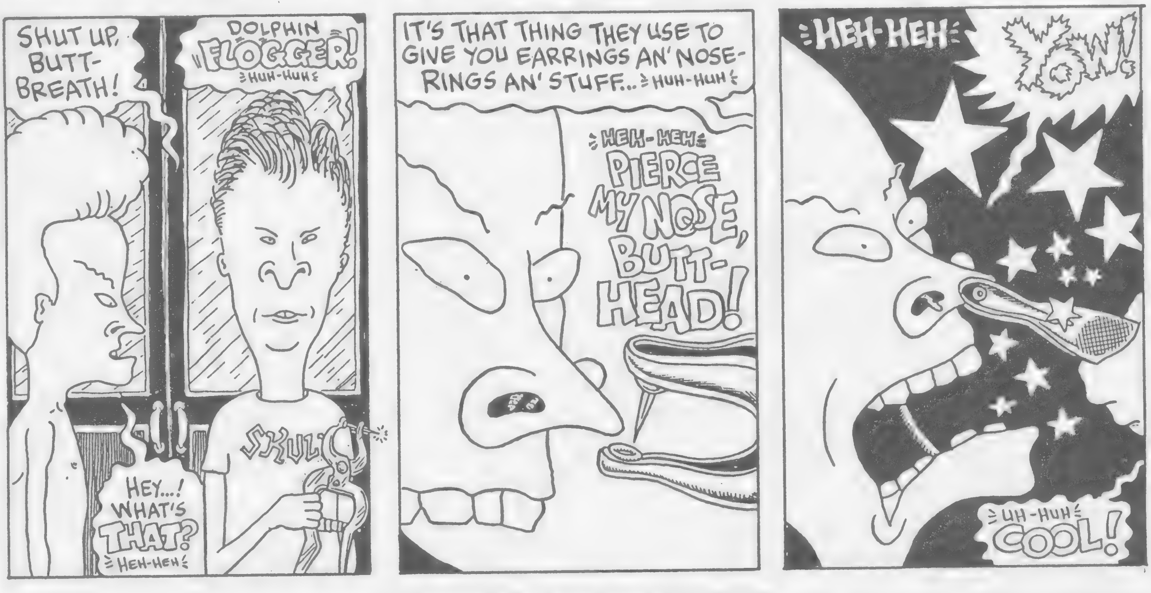
CHARLES: *I believe there is also a BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD trade paperback coming out soon?*

RICK: That's exactly correct. It collects the first four issues of the comic book. We have a really funny cover of Beavis being hit in the gonads with a yam. Why a yam? Because yams are very funny. Did you know that there are 618 of them in the first issue alone? I had to draw all of those yams by hand. Yams are a very dirty vegetable and they grow underground and since this sort of looks like an underground comic we thought it would be fun to have a lot of dirty vegetables that grow underground in it. *(Laughter.)* Also, the trade paperback gives people a chance to pick up the first four issues because a lot of people missed issue #1. For some strange reason Marvel only printed up 500,000 copies of the first issue — which isn't enough to go around considering there's 200 million people in the United States alone. I don't know how many of those people can read, but if only half of them could read then they would have needed 100 million copies. *(Laughter.)* The back cover of the trade paperback shows what we think Beavis and Butt-head will look like in the year 2049.

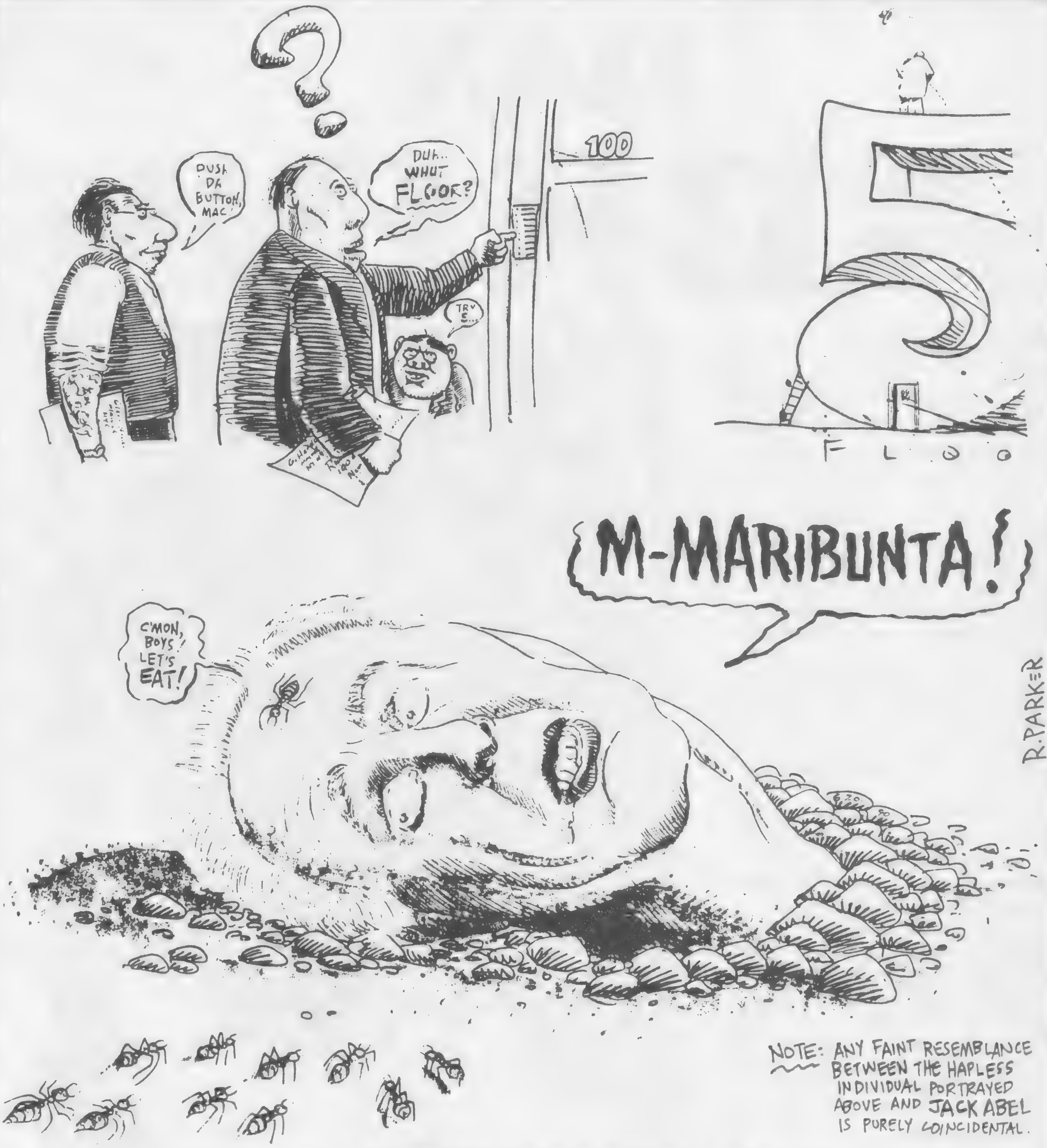
CHARLES: *It's a shame you couldn't have added 50 years. Then you could have had a BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD 2099 book.*

RICK: Personally, I think Beavis and Butt-head will be dead by the year 2099, so that wouldn't have worked. *(Laughter.)* I did a strip about a dead guy once and found there was a limited potential. The strip worked for about a week or so. Speaking of dead people, issue #2 featured Beavis and Butt-head visiting the morgue.

The glossy paper of the trade paperback will bring out all of the spit and drool and all of the things that make Beavis and Butt-head great. I think BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD is just an over-all fun title. I heard about a store owner in Rhode Island that specializes in family entertainment, who thought BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD was a repugnant comic book. So I quickly looked up "repugnant" and found out that it was


SHUT UP, BUTT-BREATH!
DOLPHIN FLOGGER! HUH-HUH
HEY...! WHAT'S THAT? HEH-HEH
SKULL
IT'S THAT THING THEY USE TO GIVE YOU EARRINGS AN' NOSE-RINGS AN' STUFF... HUH-HUH
HEH-HEH PIERCE MY NOSE, BUTT-HEAD!
HEH-HEH
YOW!
UH-HUH COOL!

"We'd like to say BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD is family entertainment."


PUSH DA BUTTON, MAC!
DUH... WHUT FLOOR?
100
TRY 5...
F L O O
M-MARIBUNTA!
C'MON, BOYS! LET'S EAT!
R. PARKER
NOTE: ANY FAINT RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE HAPLESS INDIVIDUAL PORTRAYED ABOVE AND JACK ABEL IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

something bad — and I suspected that that was what they were talking about. We would like to say that BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD is family entertainment and something that the entire family can enjoy. I'm not saying at what point in their life they should be enjoying it. *(Laughter.)* I'm not saying this comic is for seven- or eight-year-olds because they wouldn't understand it. I'm not sure a lot of adults understand it either. I was surprised to see that women and girls enjoy the book as much as men and boys. We want people to see that comic books are a great form of entertainment and we want everyone to be interested in comics. I was interested in finding out that normal people in all walks of life are interested in this comic, normal people like you or me . . . er, let me rephrase that . . .

CHARLES: *Any closing comments concerning BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD?*

RICK: No, only that a lot of times reviewers will ask me how long I'm planning on doing BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD.

CHARLES: *No, no, I wasn't going to ask that.* (Long pause followed by laughter.) *Okay, how long are you going to work on BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD?*

RICK: I'm glad you asked that. *(Laughter.)* I'm going to work on BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD for as long as it's fun for me. As long as it's fun for me I'm sure it'll be fun for the reader! We're working very hard to make sure that each issue of BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD is more revolting and disgusting than the previous one.

CHARLES: *And so far I think you've accomplished that goal admirably.*

RICK: Why, thank you very much! ◻

“I had pneumonia. I went down to 122 pounds and

DAN ADKINS

He started out as an assistant to Wally Wood in 1966 on such things as THUNDER AGENTS for Tower, FANTASTIC VOYAGE for Gold Key, "Overworked" for Warren, and war stories for Harvey Comics. Arguably, he was Woody's best artistic partner. Soon he became a star penciller and inker in his own right, with an impressive roster of stories for Warren's CREEPY and EERIE, and full-art jobs on SUB-MARINER, DR. STRANGE and the X-MEN at Marvel. From the late '60s (with a notable gap, which Dan himself will explain) he's been one of Marvel's and DC's most noted inkers. On top of that, he's even written a few stories here and there, and done numerous illos for science fiction magazines. In short, Dan Adkins has a lot of comics history behind him.

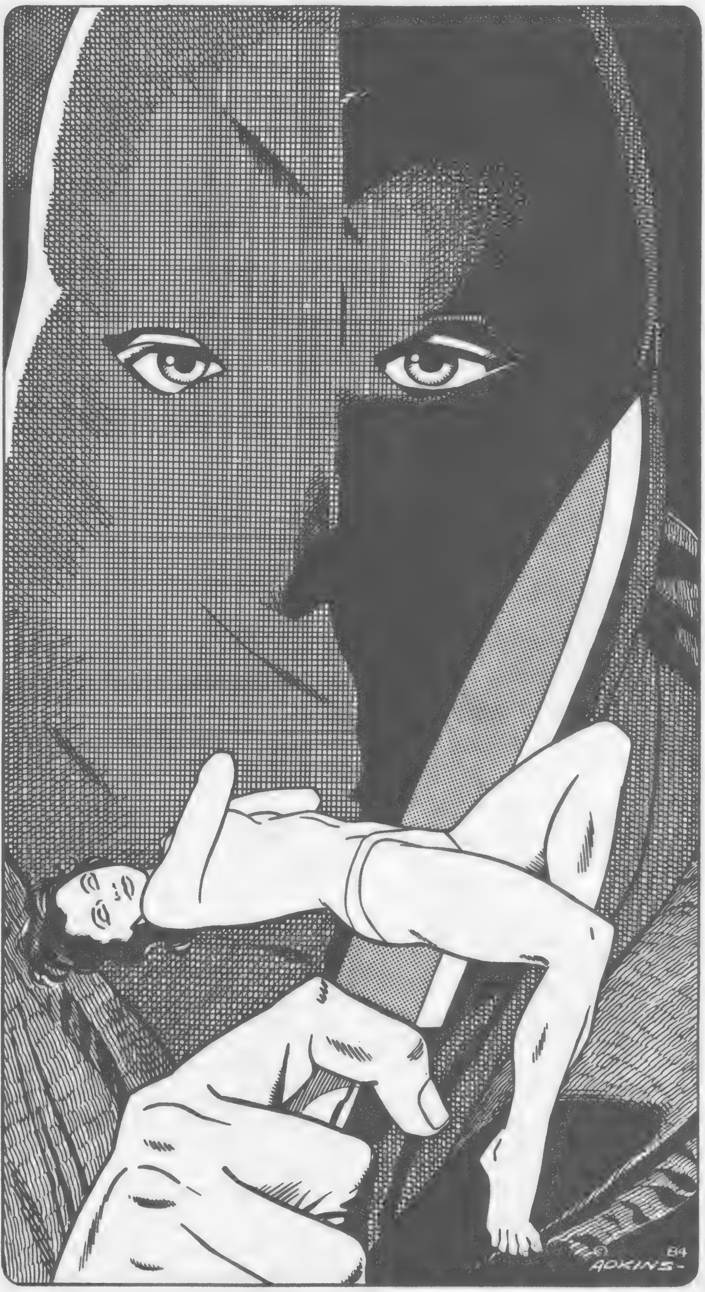
We wanted to get at some of that history, and so Dan Adkins granted us an interview which turned out to be quite fun and informative. Let's end the intro and get to the good stuff . . .

LOU MOUGIN: *I've heard that you've had something of a health problem for the past couple of years. Has that made it difficult for you to work?*

DAN ADKINS: Well, it's an awful long story. In January of '92 I got the flu, bronchitis and pneumonia.

LOU: *Good lord!*

DAN: Yeah, all after each other. I weighed 167 pounds, and when everything was all done I weighed 122 pounds. And that took a period of about three months. They did tests, because I wasn't recovering from the pneumonia properly, so I had 29 blood tests. The worst one was where they took blood for four hours in six different locations on both arms, filled 15 test tubes for, like, an incubator, and they had to wait four weeks for the cultures to grow to see what kind of viruses or bacteria I had. It's like you can't tell a football game from one silhouette of a guy, you have to see all the



"Overworked!" ©1966 Warren Publications / CAPTAIN AMERICA ©1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. / All other illustrations ©1984-94 Dan Adkins

was weak. I didn't leave the house for a whole year."

Previous page, and throughout — full pencil & ink illustrations by Mr. Adkins. Above, Dan, as he appears today — healthy!

guys playing, so they looked for viruses after they had grown these cultures.

And I had all the tests where they lay you in the big machine and it makes noises — magnetic imaging. It's like a "V" and they push you back into it, and it's a big *magnet*. What they were looking at was to see about my spine, because I was sweating but only from the legs down, nightly sweats. I had half a dozen different antibiotics. I was treated for an infection of the prostate gland when I really didn't have one. Anyway, they rubbed on my stomach with salve and took pictures. Then they gave me a test for colon cancer where they put a microscope up your rear end. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *Lots of fun, I'm sure.*

DAN: Yeah. And on a test like that you have to drink about two gallons of some junk to clean out your system, so I had an eight-ounce glass every 15 minutes, and when I'm on my ninth glass I said, "I'm going home." *(Laughter.)* So anyway, we got it all done, and after nine months of all kinds of tests for cancer everywhere, for TB, for allergies and everything, we came up with depression, one major episode of depression. I had no idea! *(Laughter.)*

What my symptoms were, after I had the pneumonia, was I couldn't get out of bed — after all, I'd went down to 122 pounds — and I was weak, couldn't lift a two-liter bottle, and I didn't leave the house for a whole year unless my wife went with me, or **Steranko** or someone. **Steranko** took me to the doctor and everything a lot of times through this, and **Kurt Busiek** took me down to emergency after I had dehydrated from the flu. So, it was just a year of tests to rule out everything but depression.

When they were done they tried antidepressant pills on me. I was allergic to the first three. I had heart palpitations from one. The next one caused muscle spasms. That went on for three days after I stopped taking the pill. The next pill just about killed me. It almost put me in a coma. So we stopped taking antidepressant pills and tried a tranquillizer, the one that they say **Michael Jackson** is trying to get off of. *(Laughter.)* So, at the end of it all they found one that I could work with, got me gaining weight, got me back to normal. I'm not taking Prozac! *(Laughter.)* It was all a very emotional hayride. I had a reaction to antibiotics where I sweated for three days and lost eight pounds.

I started sessions with a psychiatrist and a psychotherapist. The net reason for it, I've been a depressive personality, a

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Dan Adkins

Born: 15 March 1937 — Midkiff, West Virginia

Wife: Jeanette — married 1959

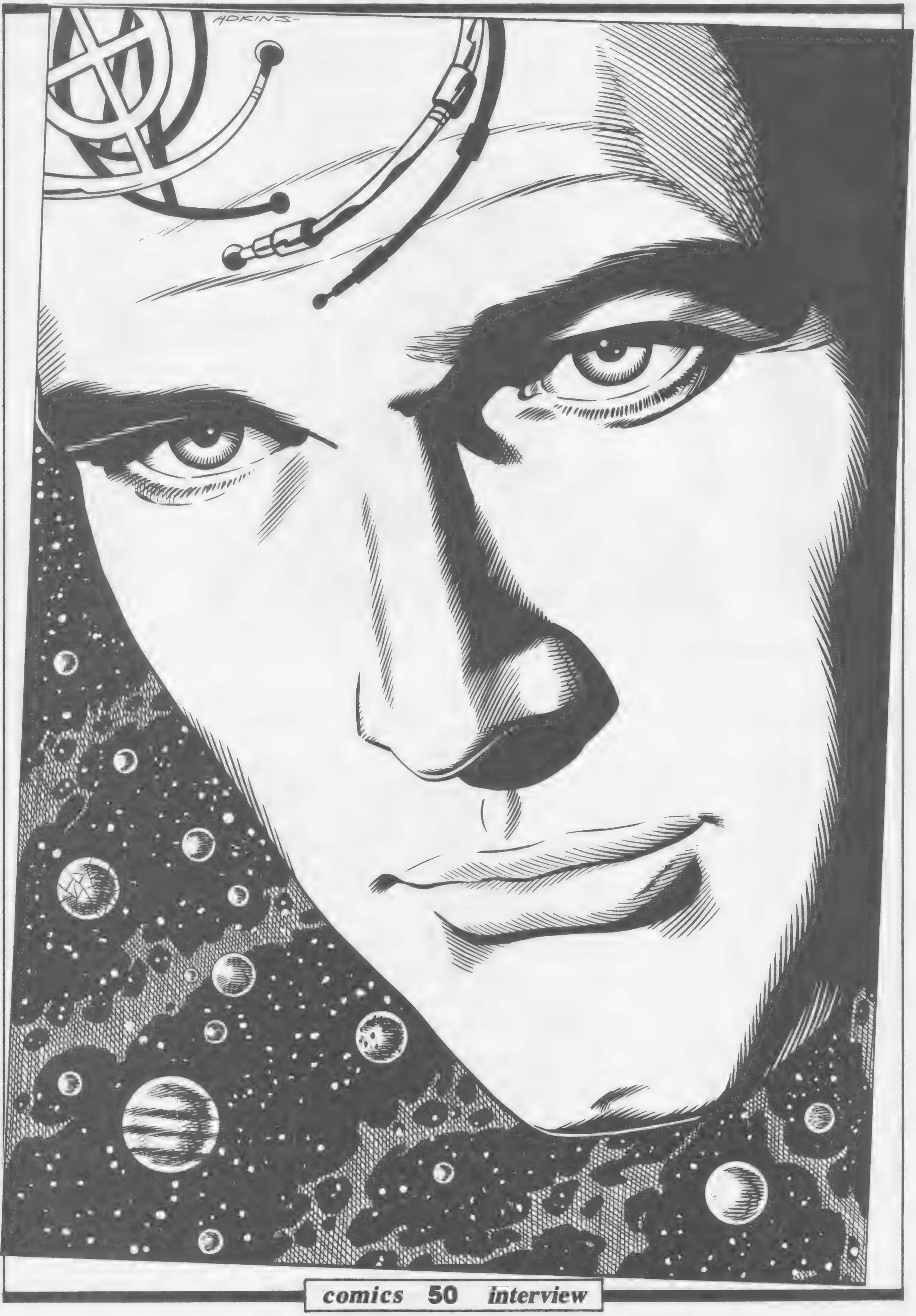
Children: Chris — born 1965

Personal Distinctions: I'm a prude. I don't like violence, all this killing. Nudity. Anybody that thinks it doesn't reflect on society is nuts.

Best Buddy: Steranko. We have a lot of fun together.

Favorite Piece of Work: Let's put it this way. The most pleasure I had was inking John Buscema on SILVER SURFER, SUB-MARINER, or anything. Probably my *proudest* job is that one Barry Smith CONAN, "The Hounds of Vengeance."

“At ten I got rheumatic fever and was paralyzed



from the waist down. I was in bed for nine months.”

minor depression all of my life since I was ten years old. At ten I got rheumatic fever and I was paralyzed from the waist down; I was in bed for nine months. My mother and father both worked and we lived on five acres out in the country, and they *left* me, left me in the morning and didn’t get back until the afternoon. Ten years old, I’m helpless, and I’m left there alone with a bottle to pee in. This is called abandonment by the psychotherapist. And this is where my depression started, they say, because if you’re abandoned it means you’re not worth anything. So, when I got the flu and pneumonia and everything and was helpless once more, at the age of 54, and my wife went off to work, the abandonment came into my mind again and that started my major depression. That’s how it works.

LOU: *The similar circumstances?*

DAN: Yeah.

LOU: *The thing that went through my mind when you were talking about getting all of the blood tests, and the football players, it sounded to me like they were trying to take the whole NFL out of you there.*

DAN: That’s the proper way you do a real good blood culture. They did one before where they only let the blood stay in incubation for four days, and I was on my seventh doctor and he said that wasn’t the way to do it. So, we took a *lot* of blood to put in incubation for four weeks. And I had all kinds of other tests, you know, They shot dye into my arms and so on. And you start buying books, you know! THE PILL BOOK, right away you find out all the pills that could kill you. It turned out to be a *hell* book! *(Laughter.)* Then you get the big medical journals and find out all *kinds* of things that can go wrong with you, the *anxiety!* And every test they want taken is in the morning, but I get up in the afternoon; I’m used to a different schedule. And every test you can’t eat, can’t drink, you go there on an empty stomach. So, what they came down to was a chronic depressive having one episode of major depression, and they’ve got pills for it now! *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *So, you’re managing to come up a bit from that?*

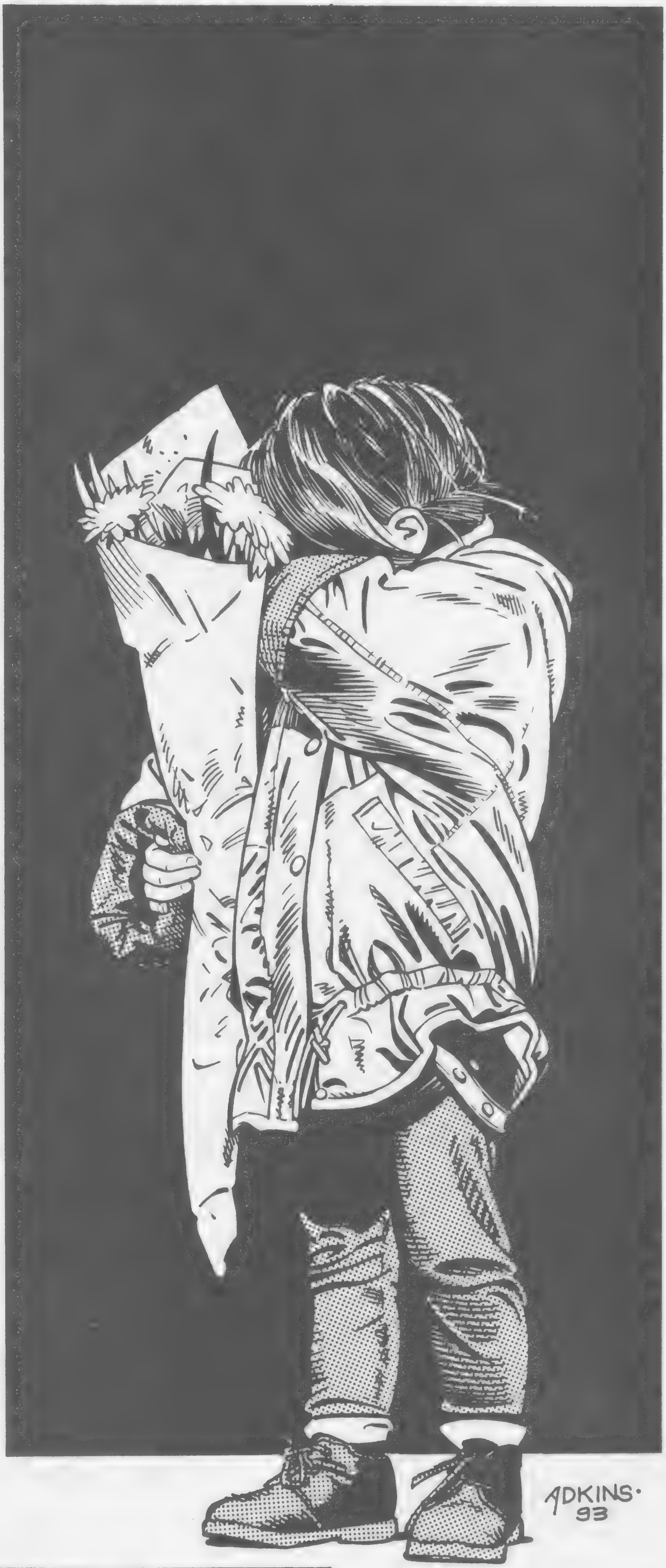
DAN: I weigh 180 pounds now.

LOU: *That’s great!*

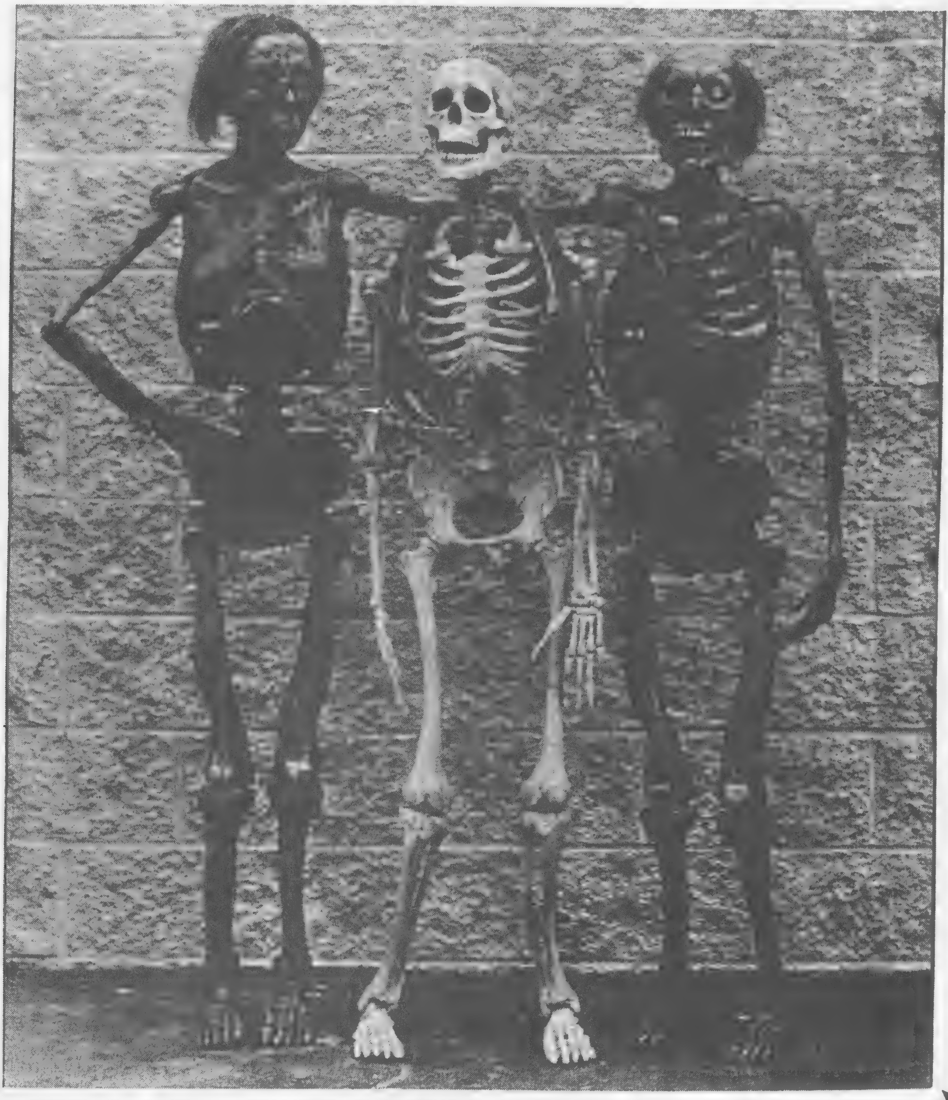
DAN: Get depressed! *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *Are you managing to do some work now?*

DAN: I wasn’t told to do any work until October of ’93. These pills tend to make you drowsy, you know, so you almost have to take a nap. I did a rush job for Marvel for that four-part thing coming



SKELETON PROPS



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"I read science fiction in high school, by Heinlein & Asimov."

out from Epic . . . hmm. It's something about strange combat tales, and it wasn't that good anyway. They had to get three inkers to jump in on it, so it was only a matter of me doing five pages. I did the five pages, but like I couldn't do a monthly book right now.

LOU: *Well, I'm sure you'll be getting back up to par after awhile. Now that we've covered that, let's go back. I ask this of just about everybody: Basically, what got you interested in being a comic-book artist?*

DAN: I was interested in the EC comics when I was a kid. They would come out at the drug store downtown where I went to school, and another friend of mine was interested too, so we'd go there and we'd find WEIRD SCIENCE and TALES FROM THE CRYPT — it would be only two books at a time because they didn't put out many comics. And it was just *great,* those comics with all that loud coloring, and **Wally Wood** and **Al Williamson** and **George Evans** and so on. So, that's when I started being a comics collector. And I started reading science fiction in high school, like by **Heinlein** and **Asimov.** And they had these nice **Alex Schomburg** illustrations; I think it was Winston, the publisher of *those* books. And I started getting the magazines, AMAZING and FANTASTIC, and in there I learned about fanzines, so I started corresponding with people.

Once I got into the service I produced a fanzine of my own, SATA. It means nothing. *(Laughter.)* Everyone wants to say it like "satan" without the "n," but I always said it like "santa" without the "n." *(Laughter.)* I published five issues of that using the ditto machine they had at Air Force Special Services. My job in the Air Force was I was a one-man art department. I had to turn out the calendar of events on the base, USO Club things, stuff like that.

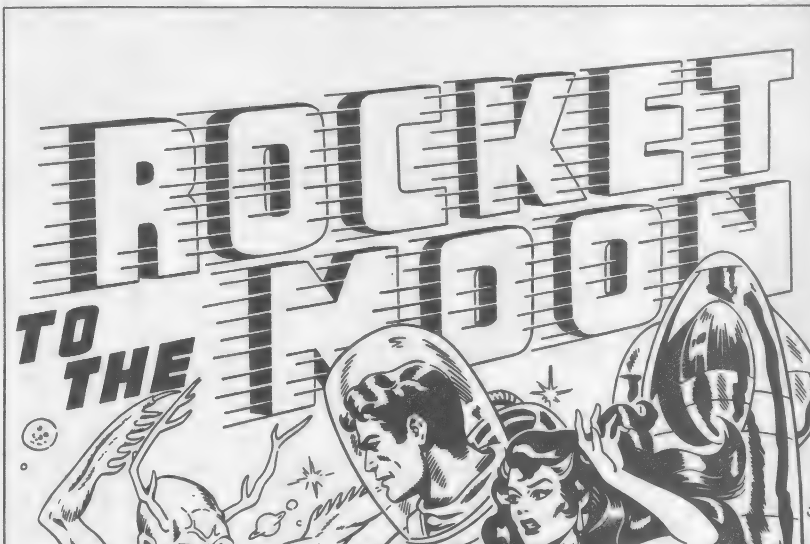
LOU: *That's what happens, I guess, when they find out you're the only guy in the outfit that can draw.*

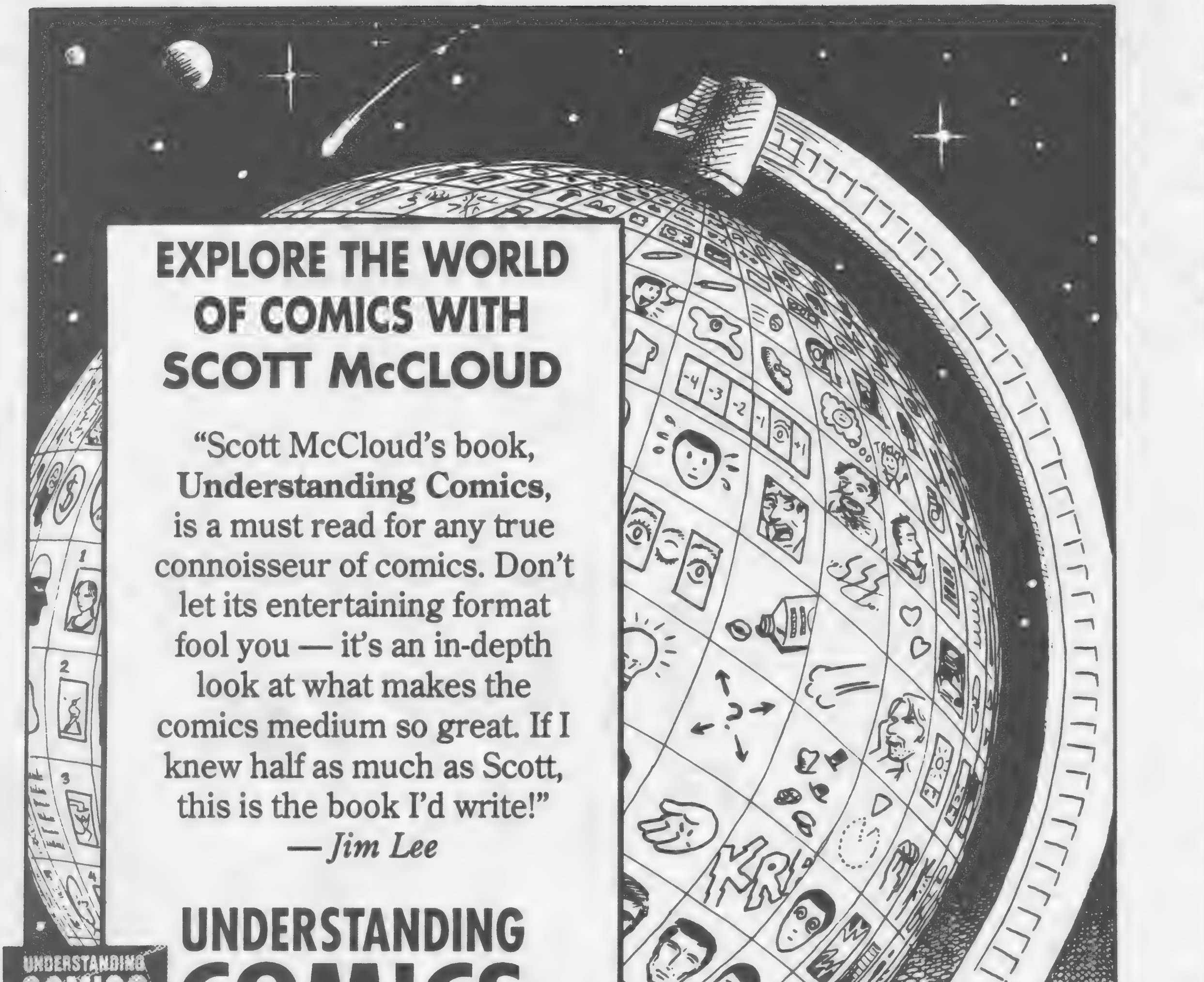
DAN: Actually, they just look for places to put you. I took a test while in basic training. One of the things you had to do was jump off an 18-foot tower into the water because in case you go overseas you're supposed to be able to jump off the side of a boat. I couldn't swim. I did it the first time; I figured it wouldn't be so bad with everyone around, you just jump off and hold your crotch with 35 pounds of equipment strapped to your back. *(Laughter.)* But the thing is they *don't* help you! *(Laughter.)* They say, "**Adkins,** you're going to drown if you don't *do* something!" You kick and splatter and finally get over to the side. I was supposed to do that two more times, so I went on sick leave. *(Laughter.)* I wasn't going to do that again.

So anyway, I had $90 to spend of the government's money, and the civilian that was in charge insisted that I spend all of that $90 so that they would *keep* getting $90, but I didn't need to spend all the $90 — so what was left I spent on the fanzine. *(Laughter.)* And I got letters from **Archie Goodwin** and **George Barr** and people like that. We did an article in the fourth one on **Elvis Presley** and actually got a letter from his mother.

LOU: *Gladys?*

DAN: Yeah. She said he was never home anymore but when he did show up she'd give him the magazine. *(Laughter.)* I wish I'd have kept her letter. Anyway, I only got to do five issues and then they switched me off — this was in Phoenix, Arizona — then the sixth issue was published in Reno, Nevada. But they didn't have a ditto machine, they had an offset machine, so then I turned it over to **Bill Pearson.** He had been assistant editor — I met him through a letter he had





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“I do have almost a photographic memory.”

had in AMAZING STORIES; his address was in Arizona so I called him up! He says, “I don't want to meet you, I don't want to know you.” *(Laughter.)* So, I went out there that very night to his house, saw his collection of books and everything, and we're still friends.

When I got out of the service we went off to New York and I lived in one room for a while right down the street from **Cindy** and **Ron Smith,** who put out FANTASY ADVERTISING. **Ron Cobb** used to do nice stuff for them. That was 'way back in '56, 57. Actually, I started working for OTHER WORLDS while I was in the service. At 19 I sold my first science fiction drawing to **Ray Palmer.** When I got out of the service I went and saw **Larry Shaw** at INFINITY, did a few drawings for him for a thing called MONSTER PARADE, which preceded FAMOUS MONSTERS. I took a staff job doing paste-ups and mechanicals and stuff, and from there I went up to Hearst Magazines and worked on AMERICAN DRUGGIST, doing medical material as the art editor, at about the age of 23. I had a friend of mine from high school come up and be my assistant, but I only stayed in that job three months because I couldn't get along with the dictator there. *(Laughter.)* A little short guy with hair all over him, and he was just terrible. I quit and left my friend in that job. I went over to another studio and worked on Woolworth's ads, fashion drawings, layouts for chicken ads. *(Laughter.)* Grocery ads for newspapers. I was there until I worked for **Wally Wood.**

LOU: *How did you come to work with Wally?*

DAN: I was still doing the science-fiction drawings in the evening when I got home, you know, for AMAZING and FANTASTIC and GALAXY. They were pretty bad drawings. On a lot of them I used swipes, references from comic-book art or something.

LOU: *Old ECs and such?*

DAN: Yeah. I'd seen **Virgil Finlay** using stuff from the '30s, using Hollywood movie stars and so on, and so I did a lot of that. But I didn't have time to do much reference hunting — that's one thing people don't understand about swiping. **Frazetta** and **Krenkel** were going to flea markets and stores in Manhattan that had old engravings, old books, so like one of **Frazetta's** paperbacks was from **Hutchinson's** HISTORY OF THE WORLD, which was published in England in 1923. He took a poster in there and used it for one of the books on Rome. What he did, he makes the guy in the chariot much bulkier, and he takes the blouse off and makes muscles, and he makes the chariot much tougher looking, and the horses. *(Laughter.)* But most people don't have **Hutchinson's** HISTORY OF THE WORLD, published in 1923. *(Laughter.)* So, when I started out I got caught for swiping a lot.

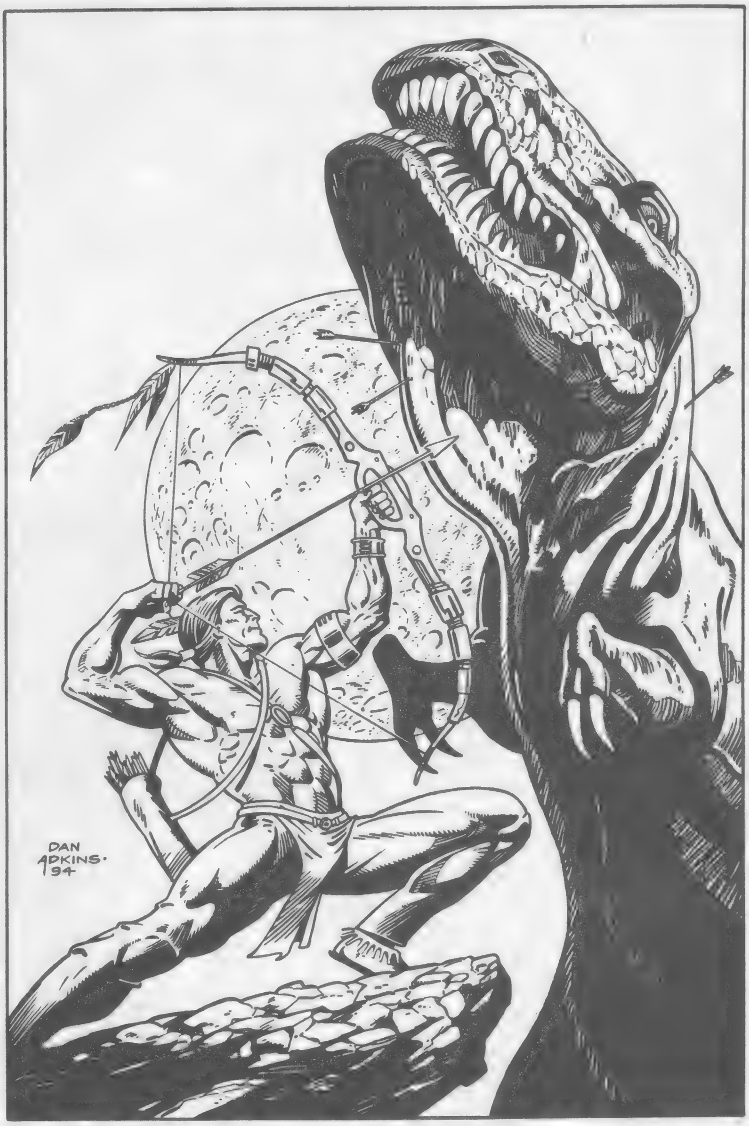
LOU: *I remember seeing one time an ANALOG cover that had a robot that looked an awful lot like the robot in the DOCTOR STRANGE serial.*

DAN: I think that was from IF MAGAZINE, painted by **Morrow.** I do have almost a photographic memory. I got the urge to put out a fanzine again, just because I was bored with the advertising stuff I was doing, so I had accumulated some stuff, had stuff of my own, and I went up to Wally's because **Bill Pearson** knew him personally. I didn't know him. I knew some of the other ones, like **Frazetta and Krenkel** —

LOU: *Al Williamson?*

DAN: I don't think I knew Al before I knew Wally, but I know he used to call me peon when I was working through Wally. *(Laughter.)* Me and **Ralph Reese** and **Tony Coleman.** So, I went up to Wally's to get a drawing for my fanzine, and Wally said he was too busy to do anything but he was impressed with my samples, so if I could help him get *his* deadlines done the sooner I could get a drawing from him! So, I helped him on the first THUNDER AGENTS, the Iron Maiden story in the back of the issue.

LOU: *Did you pencil or ink that?*



"Jim Steranko came up to Wood's, a PLAYBOY

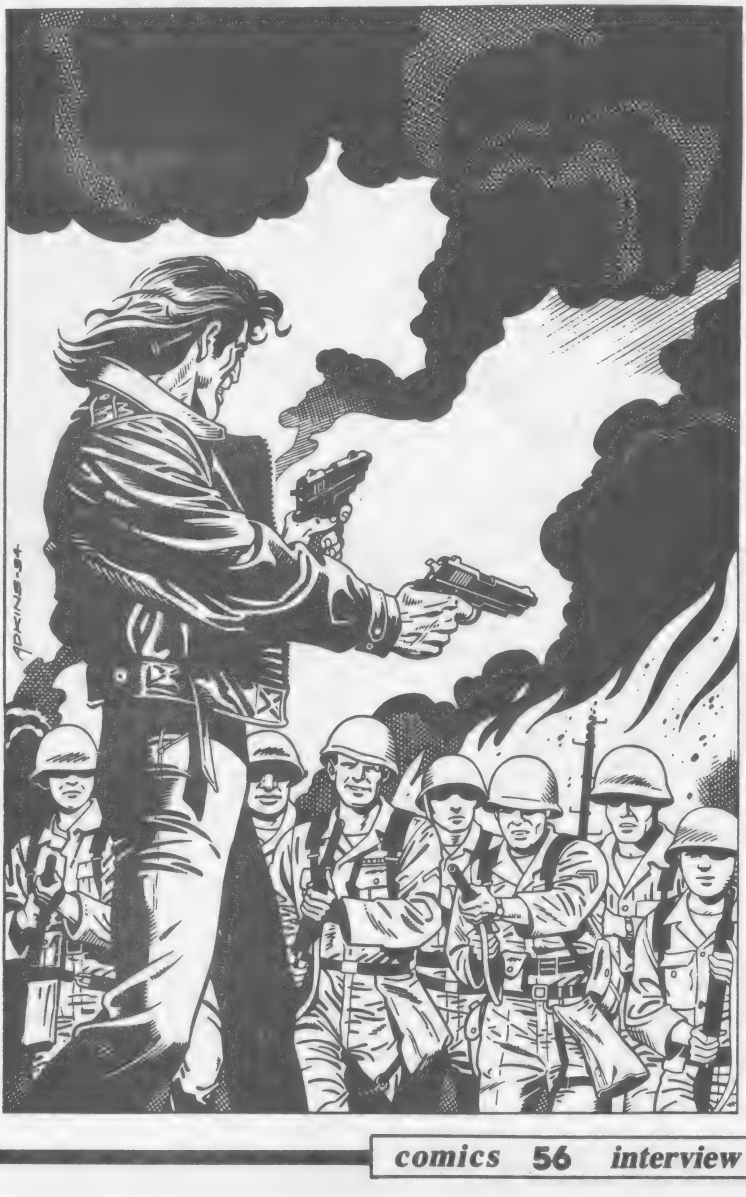
DAN: Well, what happened was he was having a hard time getting the whole first issue together, so someone had drawn this — I was told the name at the time but I've forgotten; it was someone that drew pretty badly — *(Laughter.)* So, what I did was help redraw it, and help him ink it. We just sort of fixed it up between the two of us. That was the only thing I did on the first issue. **Larry Ivie** was supposed to do the pencilling for the first four pages, but he took it upon himself to ink it as well, which didn't quite match the rest of the book, so Wally did that all over. So, he was busy trying to get the front and the back of the book done real quick, so he mostly worked on the front one while I worked on the back one. Later on I got to ink some of **Crandall.** He had such clean pencils and this was early in my career. It was kind of inhibiting. "God, if I touch this I'm gonna turn it into shit!" *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *"Can we print the pencils?"*

DAN: Oh, it's too bad you can't.

LOU: *Did Larry Ivie write much of the first issue, or do you know?*

DAN: He didn't write any of it. I don't think **Wally Wood** ever talked to or met **Larry Ivie.** The story I heard was that Larry heard that Wally was doing this magazine so he went to **Harry Shorten,** met him and left his samples. So, Larry's talking to Harry on the phone, **Bill Pearson** enters, Larry says **Wally Wood** needs drawings for his new magazine, **Pearson** thinks **Larry Ivie** is talking to **Wally Wood.** He's not, he's talking to Harry.



But I was with Wally from that first issue and I know he never met Larry, and Larry had nothing to do with it except he did pencil and ink the opening, because Harry talked to Wally, said, "The kid is pretty good; let him do the four-page thing there." Then Wally did it completely over.

He had laid it out anyway, but Larry *ignored* the layouts and did his own thing — he even sent in a *cover!* It was very similar to a later-on cover where the three Agents are running at you. That was basically Larry's original cover idea we used in #12 or #16 or something. There's a strip across it that reads, **"Reed Crandall, Wally Wood, Larry Ivie."** He may have written something later on for UNDERSEA AGENT or something. I don't really know, but at the time I was there he never wrote anything. After I left there was only a couple more issues.

But anyway, that's how I started there, then I went on to my next story, at $4 a page! *(Laughter.)* Wally was getting $20 a page, and by the end I was getting $18 a page. He had more like an agent's cut. I only pencilled four completely on my own without breakdowns from Wally. On three I got credit, and the reason I got credit at all was because six months before I got credit **Jim Steranko** came up to **Wally Wood's** with a PLAYBOY bunny on his arm, samples under the other arm. He had been doing layouts for Harvey on some conceptual stuff for SUPER HEROES, and it wasn't going anywhere fast so he wanted to see if he could help Wally.

LOU: *And Wally said, "Leave the samples and the bunny."*

DAN: Right! *(Laughter.)* He already had me and **Ralph Reese,** and this guy **Tony Coleman** from England joined us for six months later on, so he didn't need anyone. I thought, "Hey, this kid gets turned down and *I'm* working for Wally, ain't that great!" Then six months later here's **Steranko** inking **Kirby** at Marvel and getting *credit* and I still haven't got no *credit!* I says to Wally, "You know, this guy was up here. He's working over at Marvel now." I think Wally read the jealousy in my voice there, so that very day he put my name as a credit. He even put **Adkins** before **Wood!**

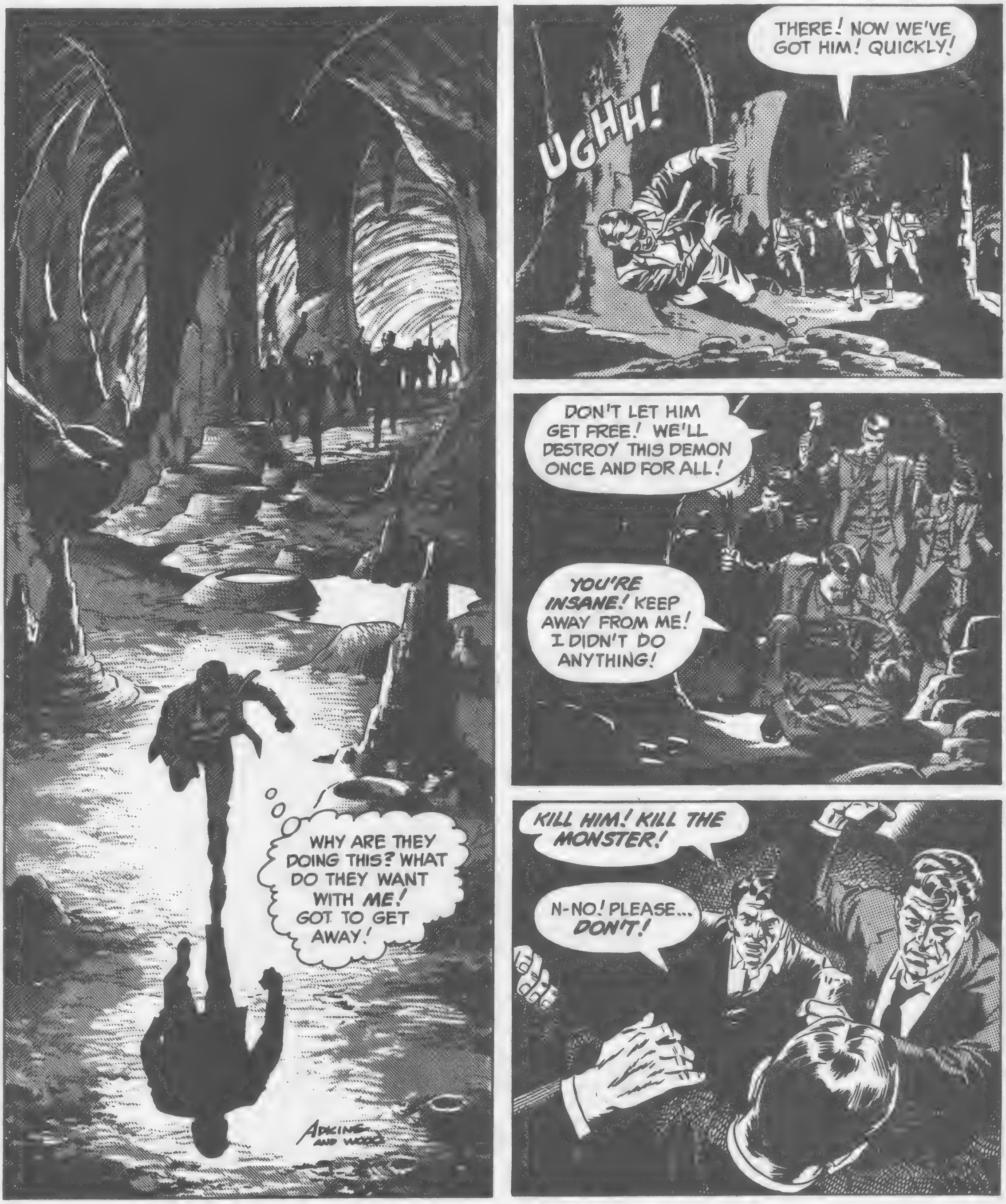
LOU: *I do remember, like in a DYNAMO story, the last panel he's walking past a sign that has Adkins on it.*

DAN: Oh, the one with the signs! We plugged those guys from Texas.

LOU: *STAR-STUDDED COMICS.*

DAN: **Larry Sanders** and **Ron Foss** and **Jerry Bails.** And we put **Tony Coleman's** name on there since he was

bunny on his arm, samples under the other arm.”


THERE! NOW WE'VE GOT HIM! QUICKLY!
UGHH!
DON'T LET HIM GET FREE! WE'LL DESTROY THIS DEMON ONCE AND FOR ALL!
YOU'RE INSANE! KEEP AWAY FROM ME! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
KILL HIM! KILL THE MONSTER!
N-NO! PLEASE... DON'T!
WHY ARE THEY DOING THIS? WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH ME! GOT TO GET AWAY!
ADKINS AND WOOD

“Overworked!” by Archie Goodwin, from CREEPY #9 (1966). The art is by Dan and Wally Wood.

assisting. Anyway, I did 19 or 21 stories, and basically they were laid out on lined paper with little stick figures. Wally told the story — or he would lay it out on the big page sometimes — and then I would tighten it up and then we would split the inking. I would do the boring stuff. *(Laughter.)* He would do the main figures. I ended up doing a lot of the background figures, but he would always do the heads. I did pencil and ink a pin-up page of Andor that I'd swiped from DOC SAVAGE. *(Laughter.)* The whole thing was done by me except for the **Wally Wood** head. And they called us up about that, didn't like that we'd took it from DOC SAVAGE, and that was my first experience of getting in trouble with swiping.

LOU: *I'm eating up all of this stuff!* (Laughter.)

DAN: Let me tell you a **Wally Wood** story. We've *got* to get a **Wally Wood** story in here. I was there 16 months and he

“‘What do you think?’ ‘The photographs?’

was *happy* most of the 16 months because he wasn’t drinking, see. He was on the wagon. Well, he fell off the wagon for two weeks. **Tony Coleman** was working there at the time, and to set it up Wally was 38 and I was 28 and **Coleman** was 34. **Coleman** had lost his samples that he had made in England and Canada. He had come down from Canada and **Joe Orlando** had sent him to Wally, so he was assisting there to make enough money to get back to England. So, Wally was cursing; we had just done FANTASTIC VOYAGE; I had done the pencils and he and **Coleman** were inking it. He didn’t like **Coleman’s** inking. I think that’s why he hit the bottle. *(Laughter.)*

Anyway, we came in one morning — actually in the afternoon, we all came in in the afternoon — and this is the old place up on Seventh Avenue. It has real high ceilings, and Wally had about five rooms and there was nothing much on the walls except calendars and things to do. But we came in this day and from top to bottom it was nude girls from SUNSHINE AND HEALTH — all *over* the place. On the walls and the ceiling, 300 to 400 photographs all airbrushed to take away the pubic hairs. I don’t know *how* he pasted all that stuff up between the time we went home and got back; I’m sure he didn’t get any sleep. So **Coleman** and I just went to work! *(Laughter.)* We figured we’d get killed if we said anything. Then **Coleman** and I went out to lunch and I says, “What do you think?” He says, “Oh, the photographs?” I says, “*Yeah,* the photographs!” He says, “I don’t know, you got me, some sexual thing I guess.” *(Laughter.)*

So, they were up there for two days, then on the third day we came in and they were all down. Another two weeks went by and Wally took me aside and told me he was an alcoholic and he had been seeing a psychiatrist twice a week and he thought he could handle it again then found out he *couldn’t* handle it and it wouldn’t happen anymore. He didn’t mention the photographs, but he says, “I know things have been a little weird.” And during this time he was off the wagon and drunk — and he didn’t show it much; you didn’t know that he was drunk hardly, but you naturally expected he was tired all the time because he never slept. So, during this time was when we did those record albums, so I had to practically do those on my own, and that was the best money I made. We also did an ad for ARGOSY where I did a lot of swipes from **Mort Drucker** changed to Wally’s style.

LOU: *What was it that eventually killed Tower? Was it that Wally couldn’t keep up the work, or the distributors, or what?*

DAN: It was the resistance by distributors to quarter comics.

LOU: *They just wouldn’t keep handling the book?*

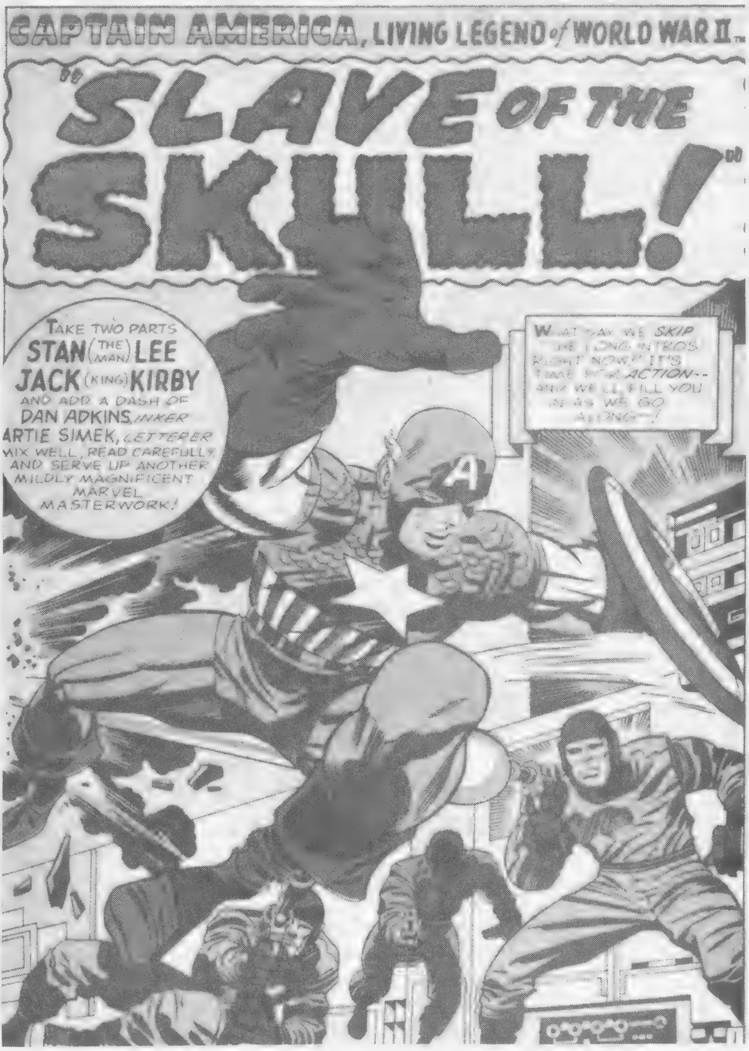
DAN: They would return it without putting it on the stands. That’s what I understood.

LOU: *That’s really a bummer. Those were some of my favorite books.*

DAN: Yeah. It was twice as much as any other comic back then, but look at comics now! Buy five comics and it costs ten bucks now.

LOU: *And those are the cheaper comics.*

DAN: But they have the paper and full coloring nowadays. Anyway, Ralph was only 15 at the time, and when I left Ralph was the only one left to help Wally. **Coleman** helped a lot on the second issue of DYNAMO, but he was only there six months. While he was working on that I was working on the BLAZING COMBAT story “The Battle of Britain,” and I was using **Coleman’s** digest books that he got from England, *great* war stuff — so I was using all of **Coleman’s** swipes! *(Laughter.)* And he was doing what he called a man running around in a diaper. *(Laughter.)* that’s what he thought of Dynamo. So, that’s why “The Battle of Britain” doesn’t quite look like Wally except for that one scene where there’s planes all over the place, and he won the Reuben Award for that. I pencilled the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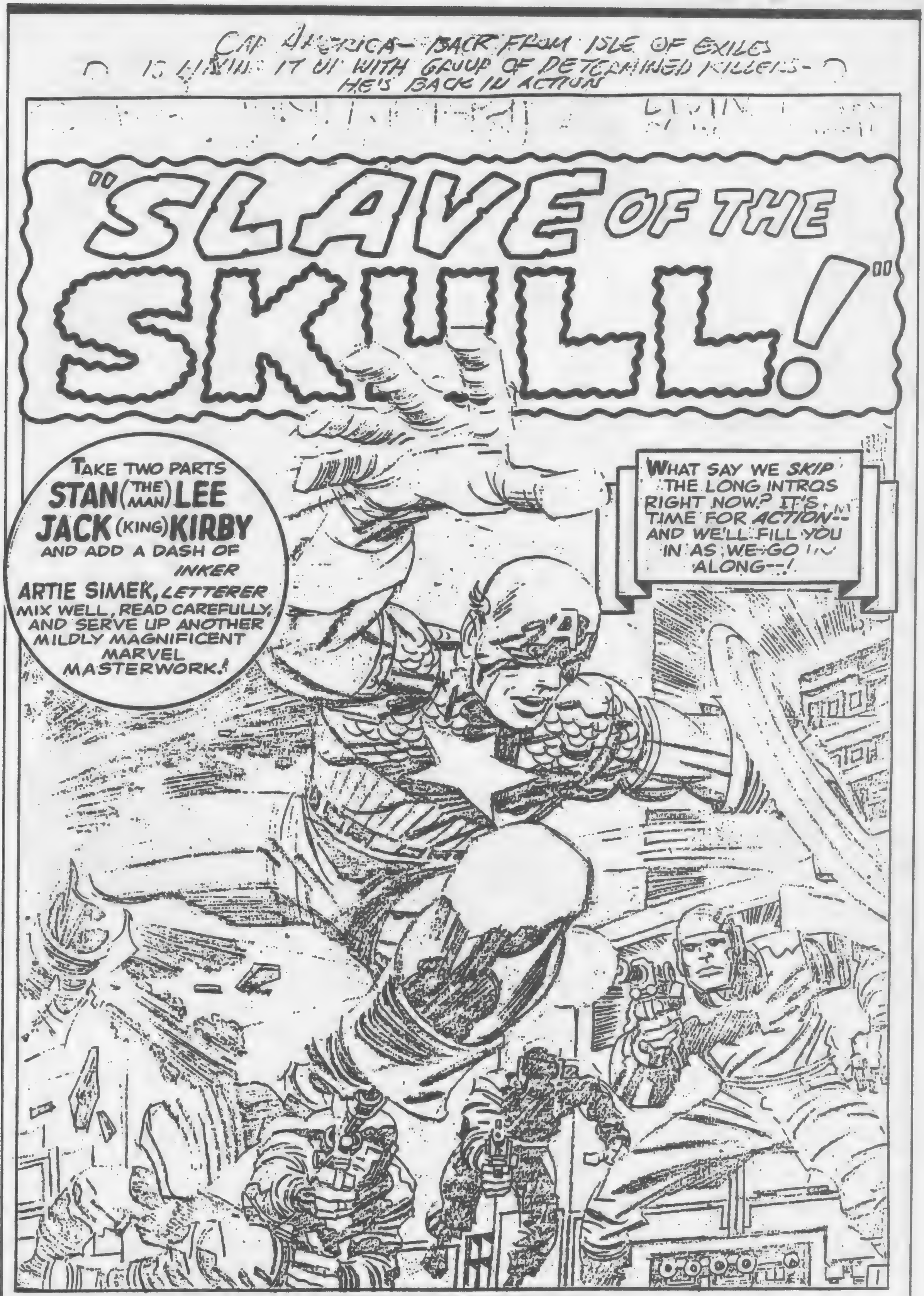
The splash from CAPTAIN AMERICA #104, 1968. Note the full credits. The rare original Kirby pencils follow.

'Yeah.' 'I don't know, some sexual thing I guess.'"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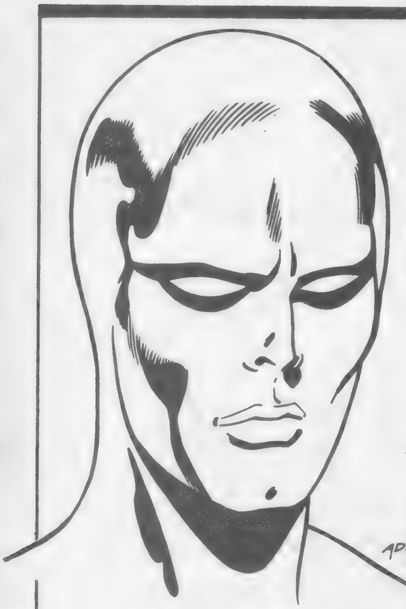
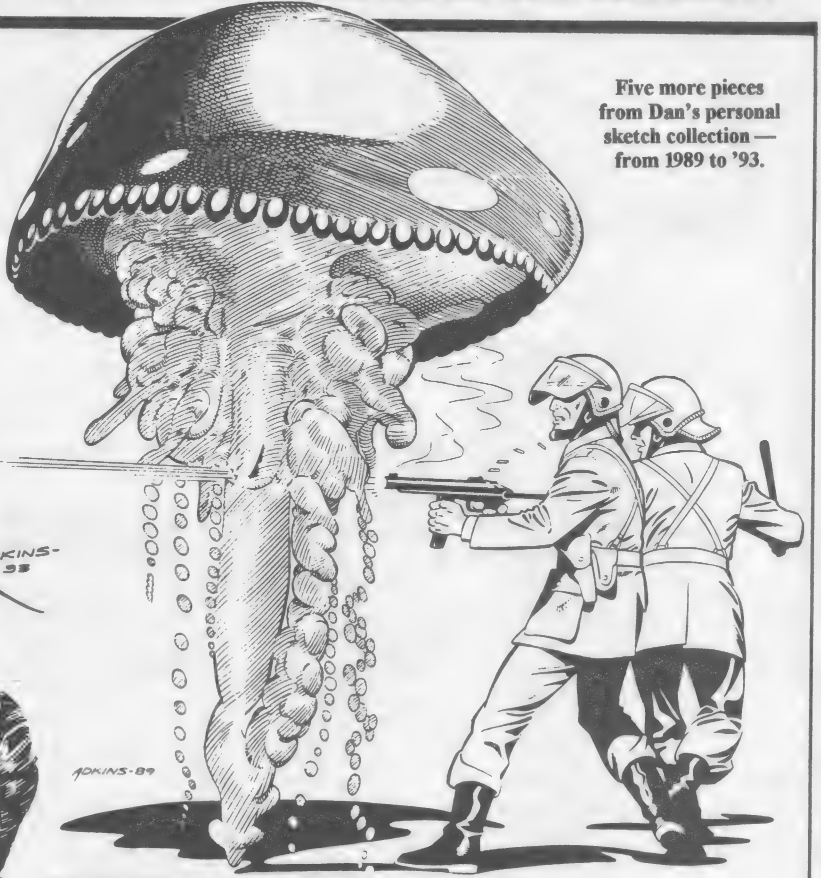
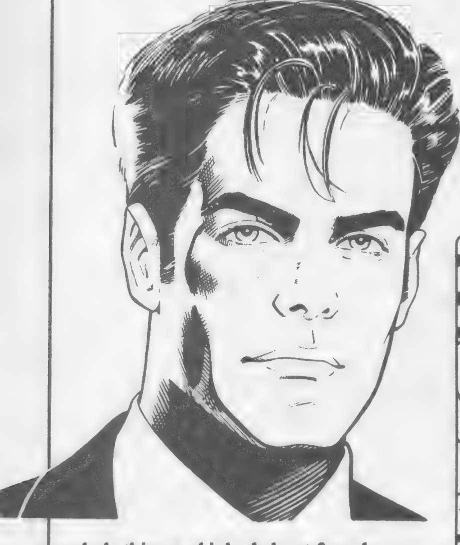
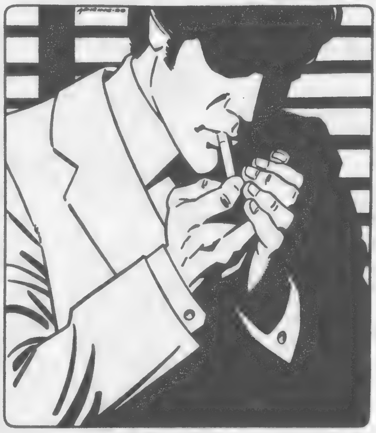
"I wrote some stories. I wrote 'Death of Menthor.'"

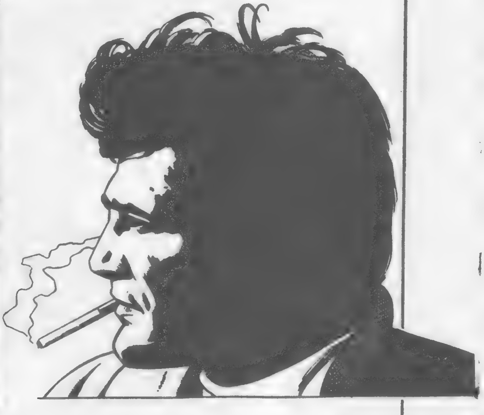




Five more pieces from Dan's personal sketch collection — from 1989 to '93.







whole thing and inked about four days on it. Wally did the rest. Then after that they did the one about **Hitler** and that first jet plane. That was Wally and **Ralph Reese.** I did a limited amount of work on that. And there were some other things. I wrote some stories. I wrote "The Death of Menthor."

LOU: *You wrote that!*

DAN: Yeah, and it was an accident. I didn't mean to kill him. *(Laughter.)* It's true, it really is. I'm sitting there and Wally says we've got to have a story for Menthor, so I said give me an idea and I'd write it. Wally was working, so he says, "The Subterraneans steal his helmet, take it from there." *(Laughter.)* So, that's where I started, and I got him in a situation where it made more logical sense — due to the fact that I was a 10-year-old kid in my bed there and I used to have dreams of people coming to my funeral and feeling sorry I died — I think I wrote this to my mother or something. *(Laughter.)* So anyway, I *killed* him! It came out as a tragedy. Wally apologized that we had to get **Ditko** to pencil it. We weren't able to pencil it ourselves because we were doing other ones, but **Steve Ditko** did do the pencils and Wally and I did the inks. And Wally wrote the last line.

LOU: *Right. From THE BIBLE.*

DAN: And there's one story about peanut butter or something —

LOU: *Did you write that?*

DAN: No, no, that was **Ralph Reese's**. That shows you the type of personality that Ralph is; I write the melodramatic stuff and he writes the funny stuff.

LOU: *I remember both of those stories very well.*

In Part Two, Dan continues to reminisce about his lengthy involvement with the comics industry, including his work for Warren and Marvel and the host of artists from whom he has drawn inspiration.

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LAST WORD

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SUPERMAN (THE BASTARD)

Dear DAK,

Just gobbled ish #132, with the LOIS & CLARK interview, and my compliments to you and interviewer **Jeff Gelb** on your usual fine job. My feelings about the series are mixed. It's not too bad, but I haven't been thrilled with the idea of a Superman series in which Superman rarely appears. Perhaps THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SUPERMAN would be a better subtitle than THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN — you get the sense that the most interesting incidents in Superman's life may be going on *between* episodes. But the superheroic secret identity love triangle is at least as old as the Baroness Orczy's Scarlet Pimpernel, and was played as much for the love interest as the adventure story in the original. And there's even a longstanding comic-book precedent for the series' approach. I see the series not so much as a video version of the Superman comics as of SUPERMAN'S GIRLFRIEND LOIS LANE. Still, I hope for a greater emphasis on adventure in the second season.

But jeez, Dave, lay off poor FLASH. The series improved considerably in the last several episodes, adding a good deal of whimsy in the form of a second superhero, Nightshade, as well as the super villains Captain Cold, the Mirror Master and the Trickster. Unfortunately, nobody was watching by then. But LOIS & CLARK has yet to hit the pace set in the last episodes of THE FLASH.

I was glad to see the creators acknowledge their debt to the **Jackson Gillis** script "Panic in the Sky" from the original ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN — the episode was a glaringly obvious remake. I kept wondering how Jack would feel watching it — perhaps flattered, and maybe a little resentful too, since he hasn't been paid for the idea in 40 years.

Finally, LOIS & CLARK labors under the considerable shadow cast by the first two SUPERMAN movies. It's hard to compete with a definitive treatment. But part of my carping about the series is probably a personal issue. I suppose I'm merely resentful that Superman was an adult before I was born, was much older than me when I was a boy, then he was my age during the **Chris Reeve** era, and now he's much younger than me. The bastard. All those other super powers are fine, but that's the one that really ticks me off.

Dan Hagen
200 Harrison Ave.
Charleston, IL 61920

A WORD FROM FERD

Dear Julia,

Thanks!

I enjoyed **Shel Dorf's** article very much — and the antique illustrations of my early work. I'm amazed and curious about *where* **Bill Blackbeard** dug them up. I did that stuff in the early '30s. I'd already had my western TEXAS SLIM going but still needed an extra buck.

A subject I've always been interested in is where cartoonists get their ideas. I got them for 69 years but still don't know or remember how. They always came when my deadline was near.

Ferd Johnson
403 Carlotta
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Tim Stark
922 N. 24th
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Thank you for your order for our CEREBUS SPECIAL EDITION. As you may not be aware, this Special Edition was cancelled to accommodate Steve Bissette's book on comics containing the same interview. We are very, very low on stock — in fact, almost sold out — of the original back issue #107.

It is our policy to try to make available to our readers the content of all *of our back issues, and* that *is why they are reprinted as Special Editions. We are proud to say we attempt to keep interviews with such people as Dave Sim in print and find your comments on our own "admission" and your "disgust" at it being a reprint, more than a little unusual.*

If COMICS INTERVIEW did not, as a policy, keep these interviews in print via the Super Special and Special Edition formats, the very words over many years of artists such as Jack Kirby, Frank Frazetta and many more would be gone, except for those privileged few who own the original issues of the magazine — many of which are now highly collectible and out of the price range of those people who cannot afford the collectible price.

The tremendous fan response we have had to the BIG BYRNE BOOK, the BATMAN SUPER SPECIAL, and others, prove to us we give fans what they want, and so we will continue to do so. Via this program, someone 12 years old now, who wasn't even born back then, can still read Frank Miller on RONIN from our issue #2, for example. That's service, not "garbage." If all we served up was garbage, we would not be here, 12 years later.

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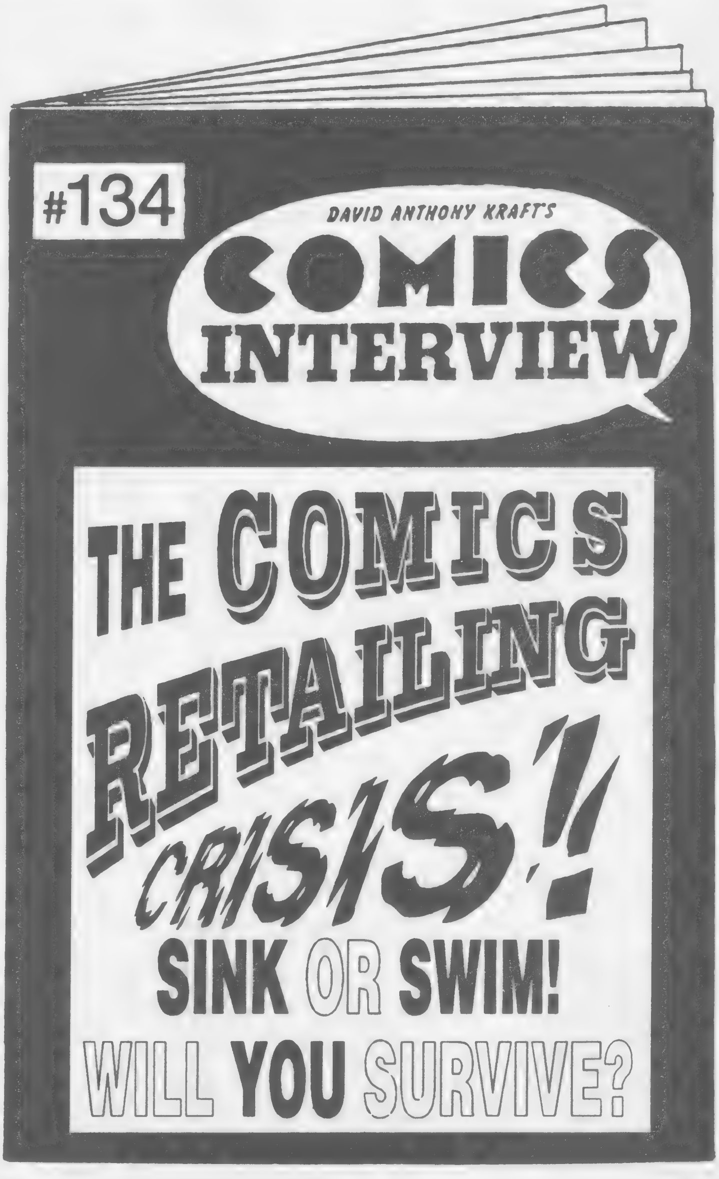
Thank you for your comments, and I trust after the above explanation, your understanding, Tim.

— Julia Mather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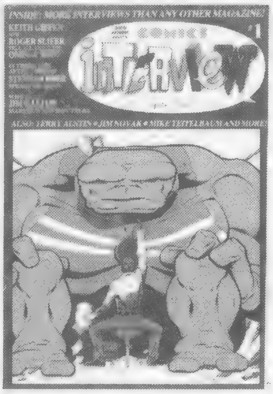
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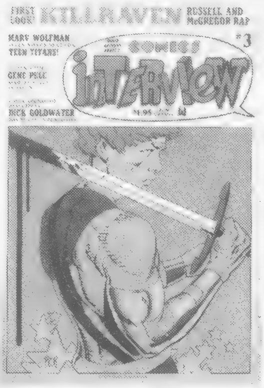
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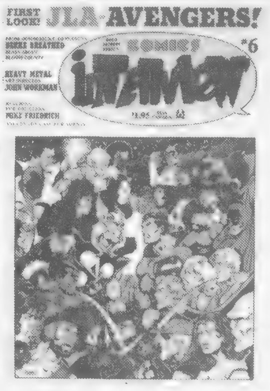
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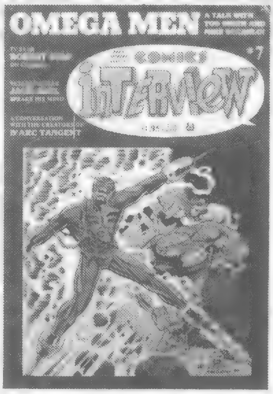
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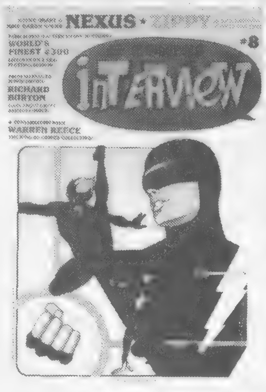
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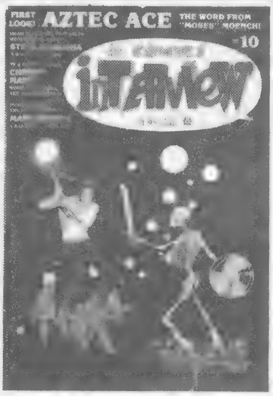
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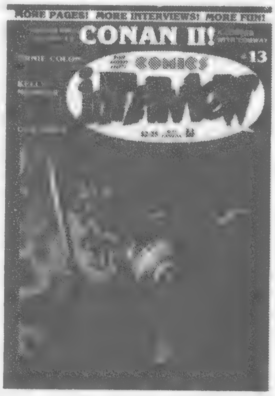
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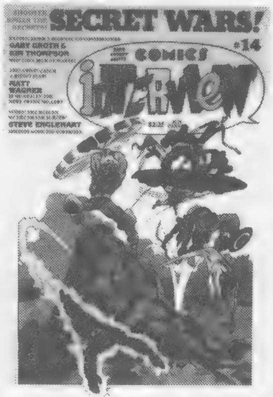
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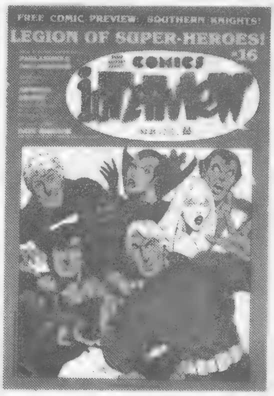
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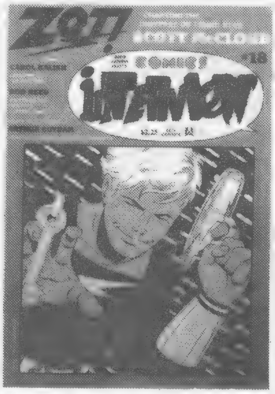
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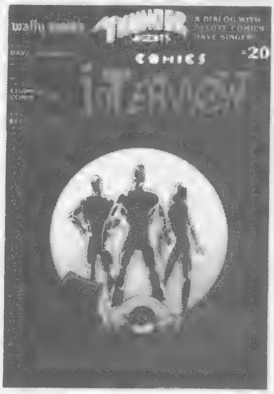
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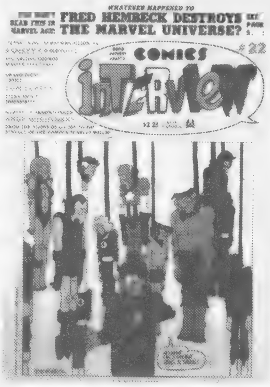
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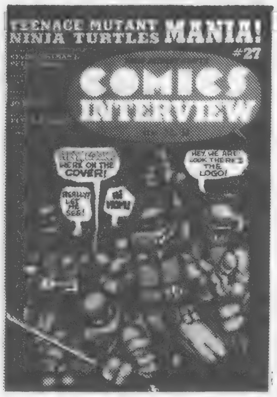
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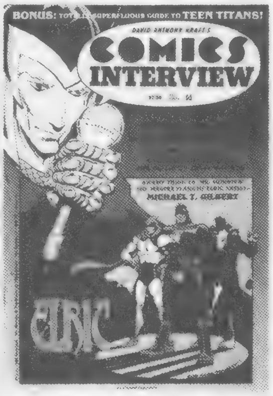
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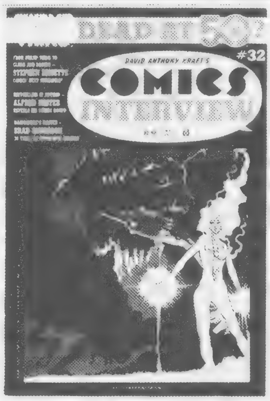
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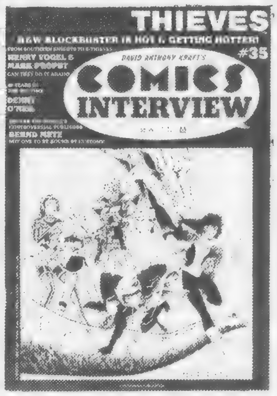
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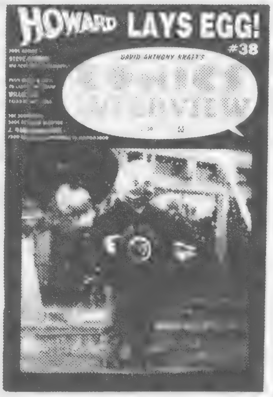
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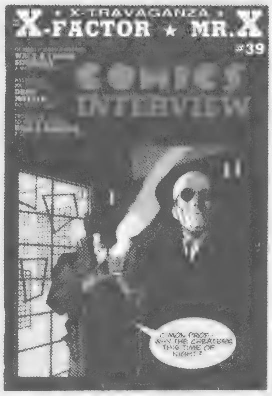
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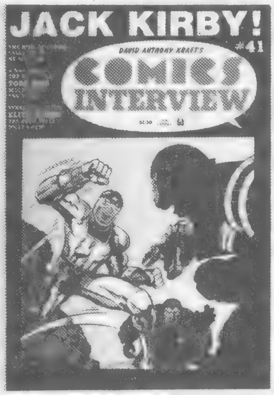
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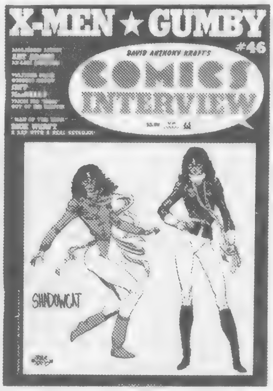
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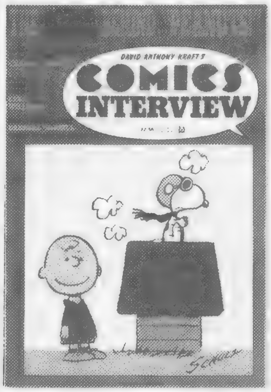
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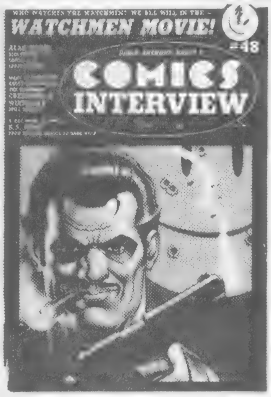
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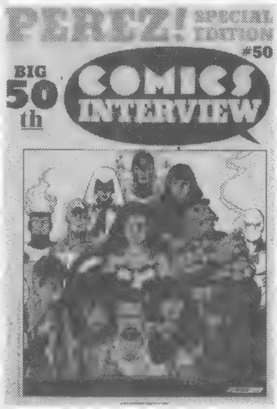
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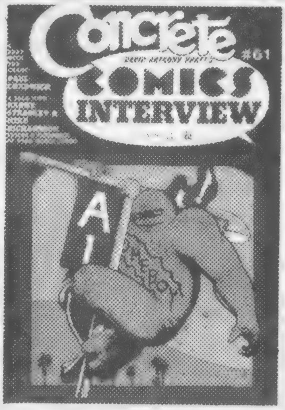
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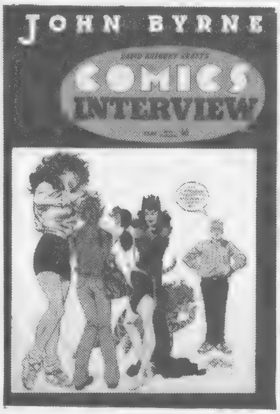
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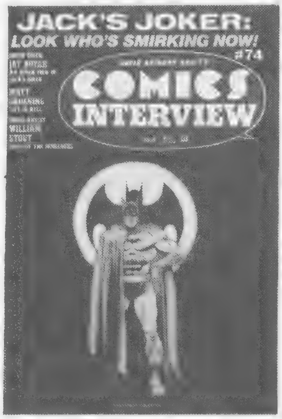
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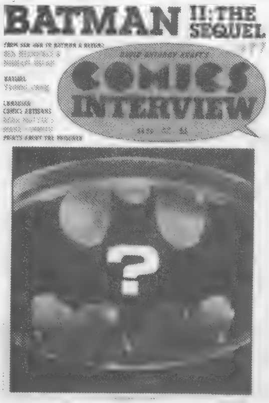
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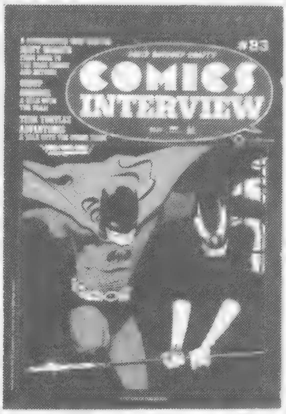
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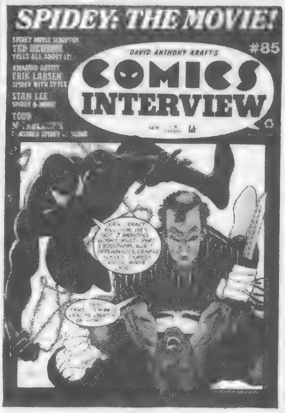
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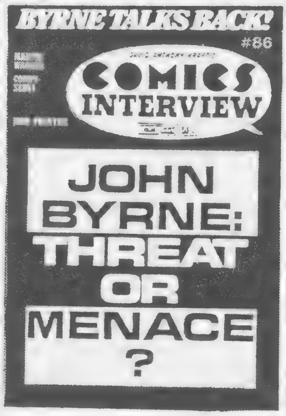
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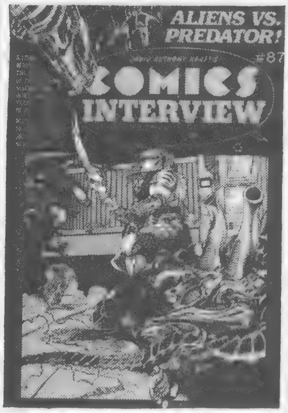
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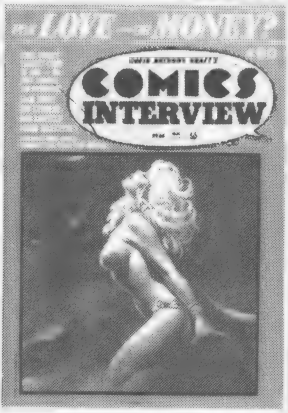
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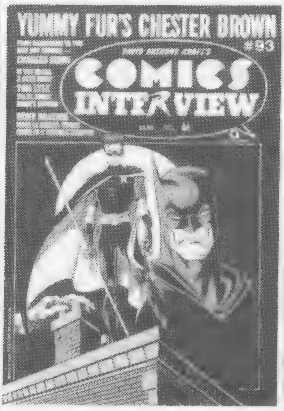
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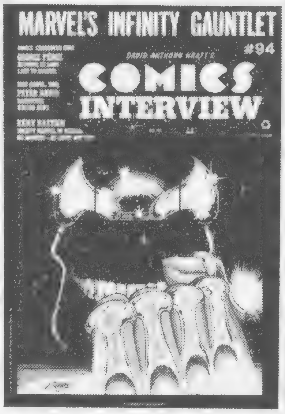
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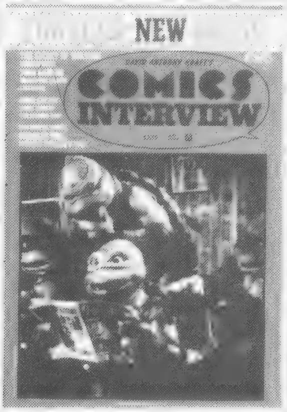
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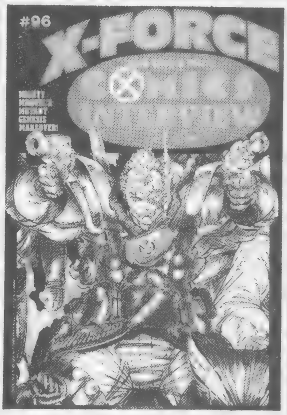
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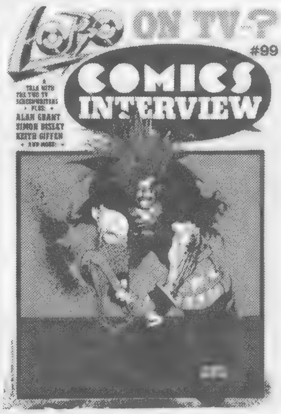
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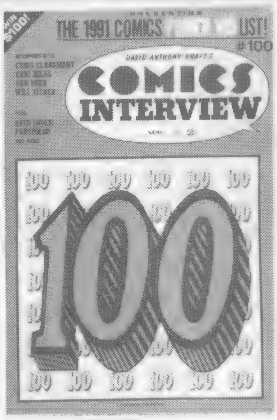
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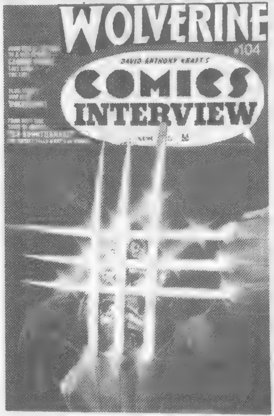
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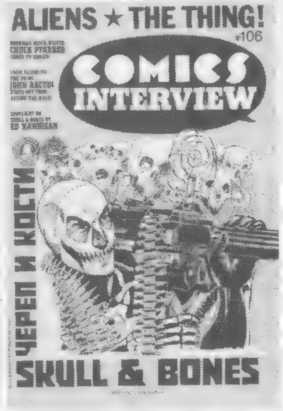
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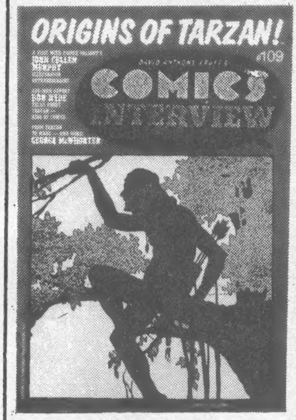
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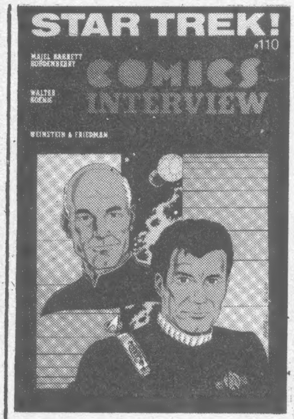
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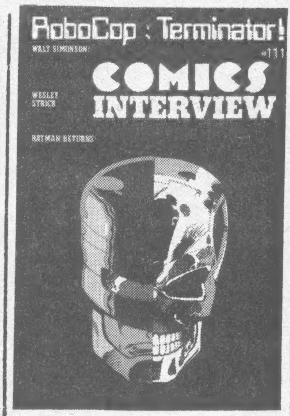
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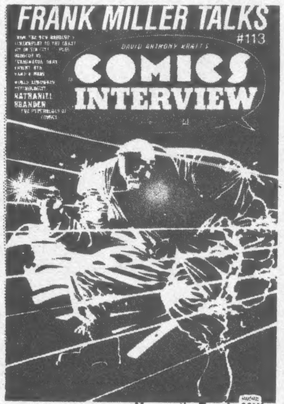
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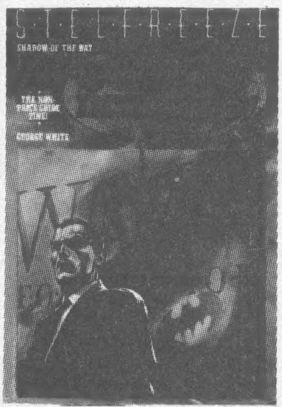
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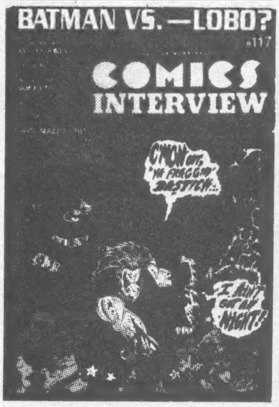
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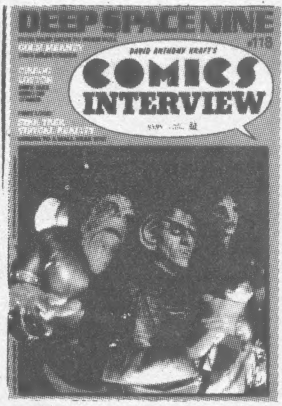
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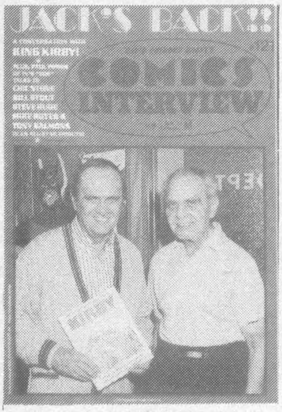
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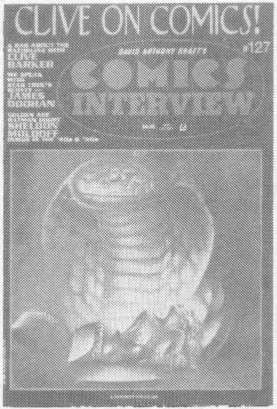
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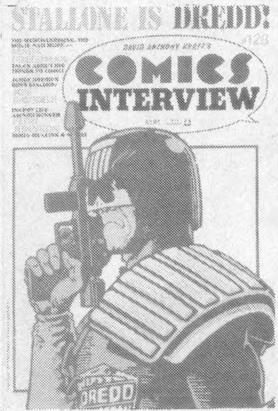
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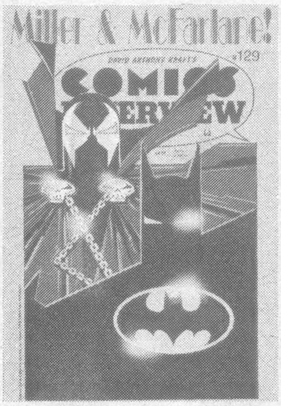
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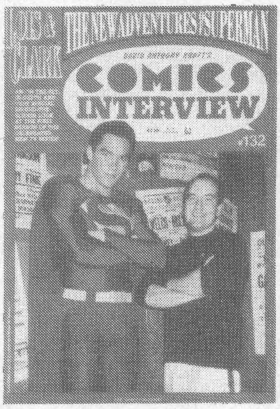
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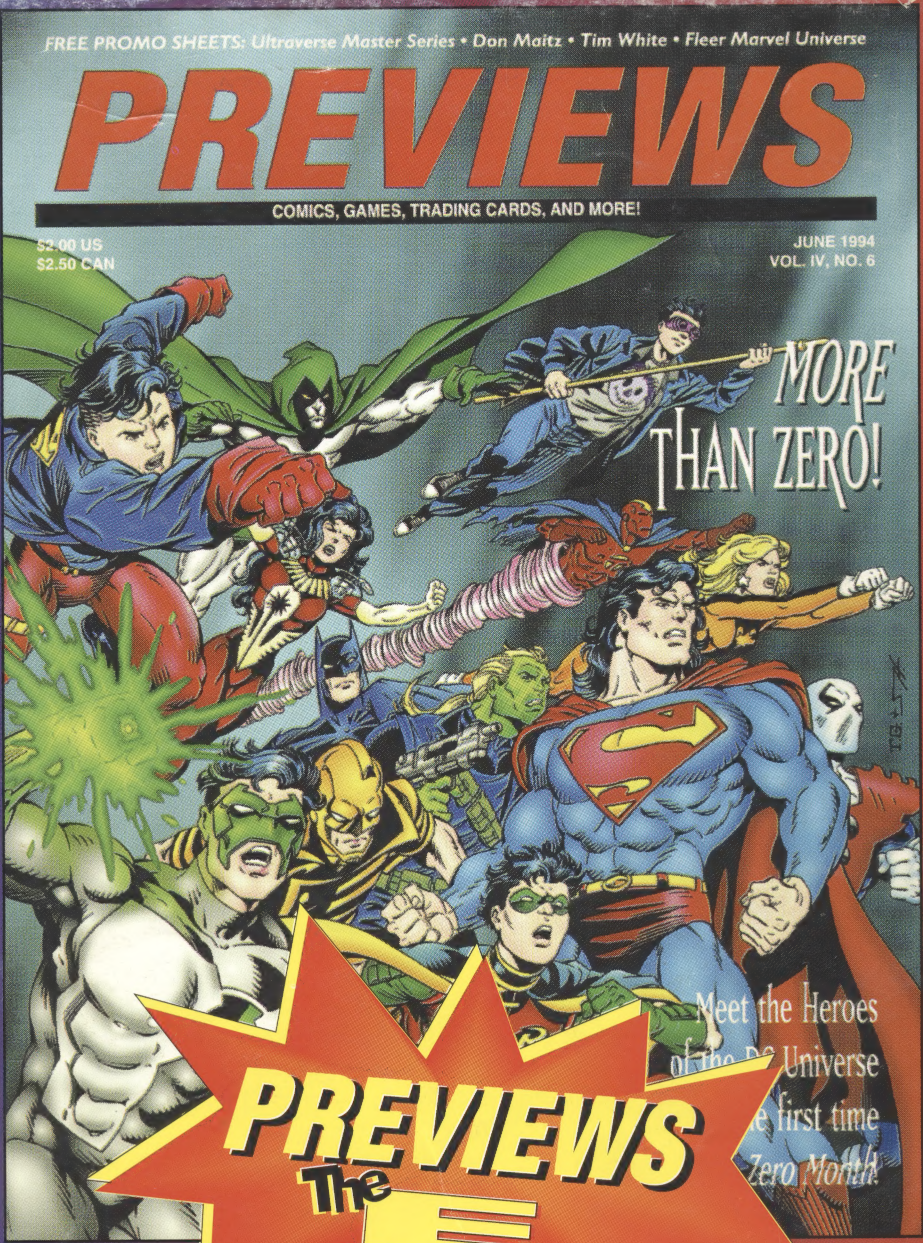
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